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GAZETTEERS
MIDNAPORE

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BENGAL DISTRICT GAZETTEERS.

MIDNAPORE.

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BENGAL DISTRICT GAZETTEERS.

MIDNAPORE.

BY

L. S. S. O'MALLEY,

INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE.

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PREFACE.

I desire to express my obligations to Mr. W. A. Marr, I.C.S., Collector of Midnapore, and to Mr. D. Weston, I.C.S., formerly Collector of Midnapore, for their assistance in reading and revising the proofs.

L. S. S. O'MALLEY.

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GAZETTEER

OF THE

MIDNAPORE DISTRICT.

ADDENDUM.

According to the provisional totals of the census of 1911 the population of the district is 2,820,874.

being a corruption of the vernacular Medinipur, meaning the city of the world.

Boundaries. On the north Midnapore is bounded by the district of Bānkurā, and on the east the river Hooghly and its tributary the Rūpnārāyan separate it from the 24-Parganas, Howrah and Hooghly. Its southern boundary is the coast line of the Bay of Bengal, while on the west the boundary marches with the Balasore district and the Mayūrbhanj State in Orissa, and with the Singhbhūm and Mānbhūm districts of Chotā Nāgpur.

Configuration. Owing to its geographical position, Midnapore is one of the most varied, as regards physical aspects, of the districts in Bengal. The north and north-west embrace a portion of the eastern fringe of the Chotā Nāgpur plateau, and consist of a hard laterite formation. The eastern portion has been formed out of the alluvial deposits borne down by the Hooghly and its tributaries from the great Gangetic system of Upper India, and is similar to other districts of Bengal proper. On the south-west and

GAZETTEER

OF THE

MIDNAPORE DISTRICT.

CHAPTER I.

PHYSICAL ASPECTS.

THE district of Midnapore, the southernmost district of the Burdwān Division, is situated between 21° 36′ and 22° 57′ north latitude and between 86° 33′ and 88° 11′ east longitude. The largest and most populous of the Bengal regulation districts, it has an area of 5,186 square miles and contains a population, as ascertained at the census of 1901, of 2,789,114 persons. Its area is, indeed, nearly equal to that of the Patiāla State or the kingdom of Saxony, while it contains more inhabitants than Berār or the kingdom of Denmark. It is so called after its head-quarters station, Midnapore, situated on the north bank of the Kasai river, the name itself being a corruption of the vernacular Medinipur, meaning the city of the world. GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

On the north Midnapore is bounded by the district of Bānkurā, and on the east the river Hooghly and its tributary the Rūpnārāyan separate it from the 24-Parganas, Howrah and Hooghly. Its southern boundary is the coast line of the Bay of Bengal, while on the west the boundary marches with the Balasore district and the Mayūrbhanj State in Orissa, and with the Singhbhūm and Mānbhūm districts of Chotā Nāgpur. Boundaries.

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south the country, which is geographically part of Orissa, is a maritime tract, subject to tidal waves and to the inroads of the sea.

The general appearance of the district is that of a large, open and well cultivated plain, but towards the north and west gentle undulations appear, with ridges covered by a thick growth of dwarf *sāl* trees and other scrub jungle, while the intervening depressions produce rich crops of rice. Partly from the poorness of the soil, and also from the ruthless way they have been cut down, large forest trees are scarce, but in the neighbourhood of some of the villages a few fine tamarind, *sāl* and *mahūā* trees still remain. The western boundary is more broken and picturesque, for the lower ranges of the Chotā Nāgpur hills line the horizon, the jungle assumes the character of forest, and large trees begin to predominate. The soil, however, is arid, and a considerable area is unproductive and almost uninhabited, especially in the extreme north-west where there are several hills over 1,000 feet in height. The remainder of the country is an almost level plain broken only by the sand hills which line the sea coast and stretch for some miles inland. The south and east of the district are swampy tracts with fertile rice fields producing crops that are said to be little, if at all, inferior in quantity and quality to those of the Burma coast.

Natural divisions. Broadly speaking, two natural divisions, with very distinct characteristics, may be recognized. The metalled road from Rāniganj and Bānkurā, which traverses the district from north to south, passing through the station of Midnapore and onwards to Balasore and Cuttack, may be generally taken as a dividing line between them. To the east of this road the soil is purely alluvial, the country is flat, the land is fertile and fully cultivated. To the west the country is undulating, the high lands of Central India here terminating in long rolling waves of laterite rock, and most of the surface consists of alternate ridges and depressions.

The alluvial portion may be again subdivided, with greater exactness, into three divisions. First, there is a strip of purely deltaic country bordering the Rūpnārāyan and Hooghly, intersected by numerous rivers and water-courses, which are subject to tidal influence. The latter are usually connected with one another, thereby rendering it an easy matter to travel by water; and the country generally partakes of the character of the neighbouring districts of Hooghly and the 24-Parganas. This low-lying tract extends for about 20 miles inland from the Rūpnārāyan and Hooghly. The

alluvial deposit, which is then reached, seems to cover the final swells of the laterite formation. None of this formation as yet appears on the surface, but the watersheds between the streams are distinct, and the general elevation of the country is higher.

The second division consists of the littoral tract, which lies at the head of the Bay of Bengal, and is exposed to the full force of the southerly winds which are prevalent during several months of the year. Much of the tract is saliferous and has to be protected from the incursions of the sea by a long embankment. Here there is a peculiar range of sand hills extending along the coast line at an average distance of 6 miles from it. This range commences at the mouth of the Rasūlpur river, then trends inland at the mouth of the Subarnarekhā river until it reaches an extreme distance of 7 miles from the coast, after which finally bends back to the sea. On the east of the range—for so it may practically be called—there is a single ridge about half a mile in breadth, from which a flat alluvial plain stretches southwards towards the sea. In the centre and on the west there are several parallel ridges alternating with strips of alluvial land. The face of the range inland is generally abrupt, about 60 feet in height, and it overlooks a flat alluvial plain. It appears probable that this sand ridge was at one time the coast line; and that it was so for a considerable time is evident from the elevation which the sand has attained. The same process is indeed now going on along the present coast line, where a sand ridge is gradually being raised by the action of the strong southerly wind during the hot months of the year. The sea eventually appears to have made a sudden long recession in one part of the coast, and in another part it seems to have receded gradually by a succession of steps.

This sandy tract is largely occupied by the sites of villages, the huts on the ridges being usually more scattered and more interspersed with gardens than houses built in the midst of the rice lands. The sandy soil has a vegetation peculiarly its own, which is more luxuriant and more purely tropical than the flora of the low-lying lands. Water-melons requiring no artificial irrigation are extensively cultivated. A description of almond tree, which bears a luscious-looking but acid fruit, and which is said to be common in Western India, grows in large numbers. Cocoanuts and betel-palms flourish; ferns are found in profusion in shady hollows, and among other flowering plants a purple azalea and the bright scarlet *Ixora,* which grows freely in Ceylon, are common. This part of the district has a certain picturesqueness of its own In the rains there are clean sandy tracks between shady trees,

and tangled hedges of cactus or pine-apple bushes, from which one may often obtain a vista of green sloping high lands cultivated with linseed or vegetables. The distinctive feature, however, of the more sparsely populated parts of the littoral tract is the number of plantations of *bādām* trees (*Anacardium occidentale*) with thickets sheltering a few spotted deer, hyænas, jackals, hares and foxes. Near village-sites is found a dense vegetation of *nim* and *bar* trees, *punang* (*Calophyllum inophyllum*), *karang* (*Pongamia glabra*) and *pīpal* trees, with clumps of bamboos, overtopped by graceful cocoanut palms, which, like date-palms, grow in profusion.

The third division consists of the alluvial tract constituting the remainder of the eastern half of the district. This is a monotonous rice plain intersected by numerous waterways and tidal creeks, which are lined with embankments to protect the fields from flood water. Much of the area is waterlogged, and this is particularly the case with the tract bounded by the Kasai river on the south and the Silai river on the north. This latter tract forms a rough triangle, the base of which is the Rūpnārāyan from Tamlūk to Ghātāl, while the apex is a point 6 miles south-west of Midnapore. It is a low-lying depression formed of the combined deltas of the Kasai and Silai rivers and intersected by numerous *khāls*. The river-beds having been raised, by the constant deposit of silt, above the level of the surrounding country, the latter has to be protected from inundation by a complicated system of embankments. Many of these unfortunately obstruct the natural drainage of the country, with the result that the soil being deprived of its increment of deposit is permanently depressed, while the waterways have become choked with silt and the land below them is water-logged.

RIVER SYSTEM.

The river system of Midnapore consists of the Hooghly, of its tidal tributaries, the Rūpnārayān, Haldi and Rasūlpur, and of their sub-tributaries. The only other river of importance is the Subarnarekhā, which enters this district from Singhbhūm and passes into the Balasore district, where it falls into the Bay of Bengal.

Hooghly.

The river Hooghly nowhere intersects the district, but flows along its eastern boundary from the point where it receives the waters of the Rūpnārāyan opposite Hooghly Point down to the Bay of Bengal. The main channel first runs along the Midnapore side of the river down the Hooghly Bight, which extends from Geonkhāli Point on the right bank of the Rūpnārāyan for a distance of 3½ miles to Luff Point, passing by the indentation called Puppies' Parlour. It then swings to the

other side along the Kukrāhāti Reach, which extends for a distance of 1½ miles from Luff Point to Buffalo Point and is so called from the village of Kukrāhāti lying midway between them on the right bank. After this, it follows the left bank along the Diamond Harbour Reach, which turns to the south along Kantabaria Reach, where the Chingri Khāl debouches into it. The channel then passes into the Kalpi Roads, which stretch from Diamond Point to Jigar Khāl. The remaining channels between the Kalpi Roads and Mud Point on the north of Saugor Island are the Outer and Inner Rangafulla, Bellary and Haldia channels; but from Kalpi to Saugor the channels constantly shift as the sands alter their shape and position. They form or wash away more or less rapidly, and do not, like the sands in the upper parts of the river, alter with the seasons with such regularity. Then, in order, come the Jellingham, Mud Point, Dredge and Auckland Channels, and then the Eden Channel, along which are the Kaukhāli (Cowcolly) Roads, which used to be a general anchorage and main channel for vessels as late as 1861-62. The most interesting places in this latter portion of the course of the Hooghly are Khejrī (Kedgeree) which was formerly a reporting station for vessels, the Cowcolly lighthouse, the Hijilī flat, which stretches out from the shore below the Cowcolly lighthouse, and the Hijilī temple, which stands 3½ miles south-west of it on a point between the mouth of the Rasūlpur river and the shore line. From Khejrī to this point, and also below it, is a line of white sand hillocks interspersed here and there with a little brushwood and grass.

Rūpnārāyan.

The Rūpnārāyan, which in the upper portion of its course is called the Dhalkisor and the Dwārakeswar, enters the district a few miles north-east of Ghātāl and follows a south-easterly course to Tamlūk. Here it bends to the east, and it finally falls into the Hooghly at Geonkhāli opposite Hooghly Point. It widens considerably towards its mouth, having at places a breadth of nearly 3 miles. The river nowhere intersects the district but follows a rather tortuous course along the boundary. It is influenced by the tide throughout this portion of its course, and a bore ascends it in summer as far as the mouth of the Bakshi Khāl. During the dry months brackish water is found as far as Kolā Ghāt, but during the rainy months the salt water is driven out by the volume of fresh water brought down from up-country. It is nowhere fordable and is navigable by boats and small steamers throughout the year. Several islands are found in the river channel, while accretions in the shape of grass-covered *chars* are not infrequent, especially near Suādighi

6 miles north of Tamlūk, where even small steamers are apt to ground at low tides. The river is crossed by the Bengal-Nāgpur Railway line at Kolā Ghāt.

Silai. The principal tributary of the Rūpnārāyan is the Silai or Silabati. This river enters Midnapore from the Mānbhūm district on the north, and follows a tortuous course. It runs first in an easterly direction through the north of the Midnapore (Sadar) subdivision, then turns to the south-east and south through the Ghātāl subdivision. Near Nārājol it takes a sharp turn to the north, and eventually it falls into the Rūpnārāyan at Bandar, 4 miles below Ghātāl. The Silai is navigable throughout the year for a short distance in its lower reaches, which are within tidal influence. It is fed by two small streams from the Bānkurā district on the north, the Purandar and Gopa, and by the Chandur and Kubai in Midnapore, but its largest tributary is the Buri, which takes its rise in the north-west of the district and flows east till it empties itself into the Silai near Nārājol.

Haldi. The Haldi river is the next tributary of the Hooghly south of the Rūpnārāyan. It is formed by the confluence of the Kasai and Kaliaghai opposite Tengrākhāli on the western extremity of the Tamlūk subdivision, through which it flows south-east till it falls into the sea. The Haldi is a large river at its mouth and is navigable throughout the year, but navigation is difficult at low tides owing to sandbars. It is moreover a treacherous river, subject to occasional tidal bores and at all times noted for its swift strong current. It also contains many shifting shoals, and a rapid deposit of silt is going on in its bed. This is probably chiefly due to the diversion of a portion of the Kasai water through the Midnapore High Level Canal into the Rūpnārāyan, as a result of which the surplus waters of the Kasai are insufficient to scour the bed of the Haldi with their former efficiency. The Haldi has several minor feeders and offshoots, especially in the marshy country near its mouth, where there are many small water-courses and tidal creeks.

Kasai The principal tributary of the Haldi is the Kasai, which enters the district in the north-west from Bānkurā. It follows an exceedingly tortuous course, running first south and south-west and then eastwards past the town of Midnapore, which is situated on its north bank. Below Midnapore the channel contracts rapidly, till at Kapāstikri, 13 miles lower down, it bifurcates, one small branch going north and eventually falling into the Rūpnārāyan, while the main channel runs south-east till it falls into the Haldi near Itamogra in thāna Mahisādāl. During the

rainy season the Kasai is navigable by large boats from its mouth to Pānskura, but in the dry weather they can ply only where the river is subject to tidal influence, *i.e.*, for a few miles above its confluence with the Haldi. It is said that more than 100 years ago the Kasai was diverted from an old channel a little above Pānskura and carried southwards to the present channel, by which it makes its way into the Haldi; the latter is still called the Nayā Katan, or new cut.

The Kasai is embanked throughout the lower part of its course; as a result of the embanking, combined with the action of the tide and the large amount of silt it carries, the bed of the river is silting up, chiefly at the point up to which the tide flows.

The second tributary of the Haldi is the Kaliaghai, which rises in the west of the Midnapore district and flows in an easterly direction through the Nārāyangarh and Sābang thānas till it unites with the Kasai to form the Haldi. This river and its feeders drain a considerable area between the Kasai and Subarnarekhā rivers immediately to the south of the town of Midnapore, but it is a dying river and it is expected that in time it will be unnavigable. Kaliaghai.

The Rasūlpur river is the last tributary of the Hooghly within the Midnapore district. It takes its rise in the south-west of the district under the name of the Bagda river and flows eastwards as far as Kālīnagar, where it changes its name and as the Rasūlpur takes a south-easterly course till it falls into the Hooghly below the Kaukhāli (Cowcolly) lighthouse. This river furnishes a large area with water communication, for though the Rasūlpur itself is of no great length, it has several large feeders. The first of these is the Sadar Khāl, which flows from the north-east and joins the Rasūlpur about 7 miles from the sea. The Rasūlpur river then takes the name of the Bagda, and about 3 miles further up the Sarpai comes in from the south. At Chaumukh, 7 miles above the junction with the Sarpai, the Bagda divides into several branches, the most important of which used to be navigable as far as Bālighai. The old channel, however, has now silted up and has been replaced by an artificial channel known as the Bālighai branch canal, down which a large volume of water gathering from numerous small nullahs pours into the Rasūlpur. Rasūlpur.

The Subarnarekhā is the only other river of Midnapore requiring notice. It enters the district on the north-west from Dhalbhūm and passes through the south-west of the Midnapore (Sadar) subdivision intersecting the Gopīballabhpur thāna. South Subarnarekhā.

cannot be of a very fixed character. An unusually strong tide, a gale of wind, or a sunken ship, may give a new direction the strong portion of the current, and so change it."

Regarding the formation of bars in the channels, Mr. Leonard wrote:—"The way in which these bars are formed, and move after formation, is curious and interesting. They make their appearance in the upper part and gradually move southwards till they go right out of the channel . . . . There are peculiarities connected with them not usually found in the formation of ordinary river shoals. These are, that the causes for their formation are being constantly and rapidly reproduced; the river is being widened, or the abrupt bend is being made daily; the channels are incessantly being redressed or reshapened and hence the bars are constantly re-forming and moving up and down, adapting themselves to the new form of channel. These constant changes in the form of channel are the consequence of the sides not being able to resist the least cutting action of the current. Hence the primary cause and the peculiar nature of the bars is owing to the extreme mobility of the materials forming the sides of all the channels which they occupy. The same description and remarks apply to all the bars formed in the lower section of the river. They do not all move with equal rapidity, but they do move, and change their shape and size, from the same cause that has been described above."

GEOLOGY. The characteristic formation of the district is laterite, which occupies nearly the whole country in the north and west, but in the south and east gradually gives way to the ordinary alluvium of the Gangetic delta. In the north-west of the district micaceous schists crop up from beneath the lateritic flats in a stream near the village of Silda, and about 8 miles further west a low ridge rises rather suddenly from the lateritic plain, of which it here forms the boundary. This ridge is formed of grey and bluish-grey micaceous schists with bands of more gneissose character, some of the beds being very similar to those seen in the stream near Silda. To the west of this ridge there is a group of hills of irregular shape, which have no general bearing, but occur rather in isolated masses separated by valleys. These hills are principally composed of hard grey and greyish-white gritty quartzites, associated with which are large masses or irregular veins of vein-quartz; as a whole, the rocks are much twisted and contorted. Bands of quartzose grits generally form the precipitous peaks which are dotted over this area; while blue slates and traps occur in the lower ground and in the valleys between them. All over these hills, but more

especially in those to the extreme north, are scattered masses of iron-slag, the refuse of former iron smeltings.

The lateritic rocks cover a large area, but in the majority of cases the only variety visible at the surface is a gravelly, pisolitic and nodular rock. In very few places are any good sections of this rock exposed, and its general appearance is that of a continuous layer spread over the country, swelling here and there with a gently undulating surface, the waving rolls of which are slightly elevated above the adjoining alluvial plains. The rise in the ground is, in fact, so gradual that the difference of level is only noticed when seen from a little distance. These long, low swells of lateritic gravel and laterite are chiefly covered with low coppice, with occasional patches of grassy land, but their dry, parched, and stony soil is ill-adapted for cultivation. A peculiar feature, which may be generally noticed in Bānkurā, is observable here also, viz., that this great sheet of laterite appears invariably to dip under the small alluvial flats on both sides of the long swelling undulations, and to rise again beyond them.

Throughout the district the surface, or detrital, laterite contains, in more or less abundance, small rounded fragments of other rocks. The proportion in which these occur in the ferruginous matrix of the rock is very variable. Occasionally they constitute the mass of the rock, and the laterite then becomes a coarse gritty sandstone of red colour, which does not differ in lithological character from many sandstones of very different geological date. Often the rock becomes conglomeratic, pebbles of quartz and rounded fragments of other rocks being imbedded in it. Near Midnapore these pebbles are coated, as in other ferruginous conglomerates, with oxide of iron, and near Jauphula, about 4 miles south of Midnapore, large pieces of quartz and jaspery rock, and worn fragments of other rocks are of common occurrence.

From this coarse conglomeratic variety every gradation may be traced into a homogeneous pisolitic mass composed of small, nearly spherical nodules of sandy ferruginous matter, which, generally speaking, are arranged in concentric layers with a black or nearly black central spot, or nucleus. The latter is occasionally composed of magnetic iron, but it is often decomposed and is then in the state of a yellowish ochre, or it may have disappeared and left a small cavity. One of the most remarkable features about the rock is the extraordinary regularity or uniformity in the size of the small nodular concretions, or rounded masses. Few of them are so much as one inch in diameter, and the prevailing

size is from one-half to three-quarters of an inch; indeed, over many square miles it would be almost impossible to discover a single nodule double this average size.

Frequently the detrital or nodular laterite is like a loose gravel, each nodule being separate, but not uncommonly it has been cemented into a solid mass, which can be quarried like any other rock. Many places may be seen in pits along the roadsides, where this gravelly laterite is extracted as road metal, for which it is admirably adapted; and in these pits the connection of the more solid variety with the more loosely coherent may be traced. In all cases it seems to have resulted from a reconsolidation or subsequent cohesion of the previously free particles or nodules; and this seems to have been produced by the infiltration of water, which, decomposing and partially taking up the iron, has again redeposited it, forming a cement between the nodules. This recementing is always seen along lines of jointing or cracks, by which such water has trickled through the rocks, and the solid portions are seen irregularly disposed along the irregular directions of such infiltration. These recemented masses of nodular laterite (*kankar*), formed from the already dried-up and exposed particles, generally fall to pieces on exposure. In this respect, as in others, they differ from the more moist and clayey varieties of laterite, the peculiar character of which is that it becomes harder on exposure and desiccation.

In very few places can the actual contact of the laterite with the underlying rocks be traced. Close to Midnapore, however, an excellent section is exposed near Gop House. Here what looks like the decomposed upper surface of the gneissose rocks can just be traced, but they are nowhere sufficiently exposed to enable a definite opinion of their character to be formed. This soft and clayey mass with sharp angular pieces of quartz is here and there cemented by peroxide of iron into a mass closely resembling the ordinary laterite of the country. The laterite itself is of very variable thickness, being in places not more than a foot or two, while under Gop House more than 50 feet are exposed of solid blocky laterite, arranged in large tabular masses or beds which have a slight dip or inclination to the south. This rests upon a greyish-white and reddish clay, soft, soapy and felspathic, which is in most respects like the ordinary kaolin clay resulting from the decomposition of felspathic rocks. There is in this locality no passage observable between the two rocks. The clay below is but slightly impregnated with iron, which, in fact, only shows in ferruginous patches or stains; while the mass of the laterite above, in immediate

junction, is of the most typical character. All this laterite contains rounded fragments and pebbles of other rocks of small size, the clay beneath being quite free from such admixture. The non-porous clay referred to just above, which is covered by the open and fissured laterite above, forms the water level of the district; some cases are known of wells, which have been sunk through the laterite, passing through some 60 feet and meeting no water until they reach the clay below.*

BOTANY.

There are few districts in Bengal in which the varieties of soil and vegetation are so great. The country to the east is flat and alluvial, and its flora corresponds to that of Bengal, a large area consisting of low-lying swampy land laid out in rice fields. The tract to the west is lateriferous, undulating and even hilly, and possesses a flora closely approximating to that of Chotā Nāgpur; some parts are entirely waste, while other parts contain jungles of small *sāl*, *kusum* and *piāsāl;* the tree last named, which yields a valuable wood, is fairly abundant.

The former tract is an extension of the rice swamp of Central Bengal, and consequently the vegetation is almost entirely aquatic or palustrine, species of *Sagittaria*, *Aponogeton*, *Potamogeton*, *Butomopsis*, *Utricularia*, *Vallisneria Stratiotes*, *Nymphœa* and the like being abundant. Towards the south-east and near the river Hooghly the conditions resemble those of the savannah swamps of the Sundarbans, the principal species being *nal* grass (*Phragmites Karka*). The western part of the district is undulating, and is largely covered with jungle consisting of *Shorea robusta* (*sāl*) or of a mixed forest, in which species of *Aglaia*, *Schleichera*, *Schrebera*, *Terminalia*, and similar trees, with many shrubs and climbers, are conspicuous. The open country between these forests has a park-like appearance, and is sprinkled with different kinds of *Ficus*, *Bassia*, *Butea*, tamarind, etc.

There are no reserved or protected forests in the district, but there are several unclassed forests within the permanently-settled estates. These forests consist mainly of small *sāl*, the trees being generally cut down when only eight or nine years old and exported to Calcutta for building purposes. Other trees commonly found in these forests are *mahuā* (*Bassia latifolia*), the tamarind and *palās* (*Butea frondosa*), besides *kusum* and *piāsāl*, which have been already mentioned. The jungle products consist of lac, tusser cocoons, wax,

* *Geological Structure of Bānkurā, Midnapore and Orissa*, Mem., Geo. Surv. Ind., I., 250, 258-60, 269-72.

resin, *dhatura*, firewood and various jungle roots. Among marsh products may be mentioned the *hoglā* rush, which is used for making mats and for thatching, the *solā* plant yielding an useful pith, and the *Cyperus segetinus*, a sedge used for making the mats for which Midnapore is famous.

ZOOLOGY. Wild animals. The carnivora of Midnapore are represented by tiger, leopard, bear, hyæna, foxes, jackals and smaller animals. The ungulata include *sāmbar*, spotted deer, barking deer, ravine deer and wild pig. Wild elephants are occasionally seen, but they are chance migrants from Mayūrbhanj. The carnivora and larger fauna generally are now only to be found in the western portion of the district, where there are lateritic uplands for the most part covered with *sāl* jungle. Before the opening up of the district by railways, and the destruction of the jungle which has accompanied extension of cultivation, tiger, leopard, pig and deer were to be found in the eastern alluvial portion of the district, especially near the mouths of the Haldi and other rivers. The annals of the old Calcutta Tent Club contain references to the sport obtained in Tamlūk, and old cultivators there mention the name of Lord Mayo as having visited the place for sport. Now the only tigers and leopards seen there are occasional visitors from the Sundarbans or from the western jungles. There were also many wild buffaloes in the south of the district in former years, but these have all disappeared with the extension of cultivation and growth of population.

Tigers, which at one time were fairly plentiful, especially in the west and south, are now very rare, but are met with in the hilly country on the west close to the borders of the Singhbhūm district. One was shot two or three years ago near Nayāgrām, and occasionally one or two wander in from Mayūrbhanj and Orissa. Leopards, on the other hand, have maintained their numbers and have even increased in the north of the district. There they commit depredations among cattle and goats, sometimes also killing human beings. In 1905 one got into a village about 6 miles from Midnapore and killed one man and severely mauled another before it was shot. Bears are still plentiful in the west, the abundance of white-ants' nests, honeycombs, and *mahuā* trees in this portion of the district affording them ample food. Hyænas are found in the jungles bordering villages, and the civet cat, jungle cat and fox are common.

Wild pigs were found in great numbers in the south of the district thirty years ago, and afforded some of the best pig-sticking in Bengal. They are still fairly numerous, but are now mostly found in the *sāl* jungles in the north and west. They sometimes

do damage to crops, but they fall an easy prey to the Santāls, who keep their numbers down. The *sāmbar* is rare, but is met with in the north and west, and so also are spotted deer, barking deer, ravine deer and four-horned antelope. Large herds of spotted deer existed in Contai about thirty years ago, but are now extinct there. Hares are common.

Game birds. The game birds of the district consist of jungle-fowl, pea-fowl, grey and black partridge, various kinds of quail, grey lag and bar-headed geese, and wild duck of almost every description. Amongst the latter the red-headed pochard, gadwal, pintail and pearl-eyed pochard are the most common. The following varieties of teal are found scattered throughout the district:—the blue-winged teal, cotton teal and whistling teal. Snipe are fairly numerous in parts, and the golden plover is also met with. These birds all suffer from the indiscriminate destruction of game by the aboriginal tribes inhabiting the jungles, and all, except the migratory kinds, are decreasing in number.

Fish. The estuaries and tidal waters of the Hooghly, Rasūlpur, Haldi and Rūpnārāyan constitute valuable fisheries owing to their large area and the prolific supply of fish found in them. Fishing takes place in the autumn and cold weather from October to March, after which a strong south wind sets in. The busiest season is from November to February, when parties of fishermen take advantage of the calm weather to venture out along the sea board. There is not much fishing in the non-tidal rivers, for being almost dry in the hot weather they contain few fish. There is a fair amount of estuarine fish in the Orissa Coast Canal, and the fishery rights in it are let out in sections, usually by auction. Crustaceans, such as shrimps, prawns and crabs, are numerous, and the curious horse-shoe crab is found at Chāndpur on the coast.

Reptiles. The following venomous species of Ophidia are found:—The cobra (*Naya tripudians*), *karait* (*Bungarus coeruleus*), *rāj-sāmp* or banded *karait* (*bungarus fasciatus*) and Russell's viper (*Vipera Russelli*). There are also poisonous sea snakes along the coast. Among the non-venomous snakes, which are numerous, may be mentioned the python (*Python molurus*), the *dhāman* (*Zamensis Mucosus*), the green tree snake, the lycodon, the checkered snake (*Tropidonotus*) and other ground and burrowing snakes (*Typhlops*). The *magar* or common snub-nosed crocodile and the *ghariāl* (*Gavialis gangeticus*) are found in tidal waters, and fresh-water and mud turtles in rivers and large tanks. The large lizard known as the monitor, or *gui-sāmp*, is common, and the tree chameleon is found in the west, besides numerous

other small tree and ground lizards, and also some of the snake-like lizards or skinks (*Scincidæ*).

Insects. The various orders of insects are well represented. There are diurnal and nocturnal Lepidoptera of various kinds, among them being varieties of silk worm (*Bombyx Mori*) and tusser worm. Among the Mantidæ is the curious rose-leafed insect called *Gongylus gongylides*, which has been found near the station of Midnapore. Crickets, grass, hoppers, cockroaches, termites, many species of diptera, bees, wasps, ants, ichneumon flies, and many of the Coleoptera abound.

CLIMATE. The climate of the arid stretches in the north and west of the district is very different from that of the swamps in the east and south. In the latter tract the climate is like that of the 24-Parganas, being hot and humid. In the former tract it is like that of Singhbhūm, being characterized by a fierce dry heat in the hot weather, a short cold weather and a moderate rainfall.

Rainfall. In the cold weather months of November and December only a fraction of an inch falls monthly, such rain as there is being due to the northward movement of cyclonic storms from the south of the Bay of Bengal. From about the end of December, when the northerly trade wind has become established, cold season storms are caused by shallow depressions, which originate in the north-west of the Bay and move eastward. During their passage they cause general cloudy weather and light rainfall. These depressions continue during the hot weather months, but after the southerly winds have commenced, thunderstorms are as frequent a feature as they are the reverse in January and February.

At the end of January or the beginning of February local sea breezes commence. They increase in force and extend their influence further inland with the increasing temperature of the hot weather months. There occur occasionally during those months, and with greater frequency as the season advances, periods of atmospheric disturbance, the most important feature of which is the occurrence of local hot weather storms usually called nor'-westers. These thunderstorms are generally accompanied by heavy showers, but the rainfall in March and April is only 2 inches a month. In May there is a rapid increase owing to the occasional incursion of cyclonic storms, and the rainfall consequently rises to over 5 inches. During the monsoon season the weather conditions in Midnapore are very much the same as in other parts of South-West Bengal. The rainfall is maintained chiefly by cyclonic storms, which form in the north-west angle of

the Bay and influence weather over the whole of the south-west of the Province, and by inland depressions which form over the central districts of Bengal and move slowly westward. The following table shows the average rainfall recorded at the different rain-registering stations during the cold, hot and rainy seasons :—

Station.	Years. recorded.	November to February.	March to May.	June to October.	Total.
Contai ...	31	3·15	7·38	56·14	66·67
Dāntan ...	7–8	0·83	7·84	47·74	56·41
Garhbetā ...	15–16	1·62	7·88	49·18	58·68
Ghātāl ...	24–25	1·90	8·84	48·82	59·56
Kukrāhāti	13–14	2·34	7·76	50·03	60·13
Midnapore ...	37–42	2·23	8·22	47·57	58·02
Pānskura ...	7–8	1·04	8·33	47·94	57·31
Tamlūk ...	30–31	1·98	8·23	48·57	58·78
Average ...	...	1·89	8·06	49·50	59·45

Temperature.

In Midnapore, as in some of the more westerly districts of South-West Bengal, where the surface soil is composed of red laterite and the hot westerly winds from Central India penetrate at times, exceptionally high day temperatures are a feature of the hot weather months. The mean maximum temperature, which is on an average 80° in December, rises to 85° in February, 94° in March and 102° in April and May. Thereafter there is a steady fall until the monsoon is established.

Winds.

From about the middle of March a strong breeze begins to blow from the south, and continues through the hot weather. From the beginning of June these local sea breezes are replaced by the steadier sea winds of the south-west monsoon, which blows till the month of October. This is followed by a short calm lasting till about the middle of November, and broken only by cyclones, occasionally accompanied by storm-waves, which are never so severe or so disastrous as during this period. The north wind then sets in, and lasts generally till about the end of February.

Cyclones.

Cyclones from the Bay of Bengal are a frequent feature of the whole period during which the south-west monsoon current prevails. They are all marked by the same features of vorticos air motion, progressive advance from the interior of the Bay towards the coast, and very heavy rainfall over and near the area of cyclonic disturbance. They differ very consider-

ably, however, in extent and intensity. Those which occur in the rains proper (*i.e.*, from June to September) are generally small in extent, the barometric depression at the centre seldom exceeding half an inch, while the air motion, though violent, is rarely of hurricane force. The most destructive cyclones are those which are occasionally generated during the transition periods antecedent and subsequent to the full establishment and prevalence of the south-west monsoon in Northern India, *i.e.*, during April and May, October and November. A description of some of these cyclones will be found in the chapter on Natural Calamities.

The following table gives the salient meteorological statistics for the town of Midnapore, which is situated 149 feet above sea level:—

MONTH.	Monthly mean 8 A.M. temperature.	Monthly mean maximum temperature.	Monthly mean minimum temperature.	Monthly mean temperature of the day.	Monthly mean 8 A.M. humidity.	Monthly average rainfall.	Monthly mean wind direction at 8 A.M.	Monthly average wind velocity in miles per hour.
	Degree.	Degree.	Degree.	Degree.	Per cent.	Inches.	Degree.	
January...	61·6	81·0	55·3	67·2	68·3	0 55	N 3 W	3·4
February	67·8	84·6	59·5	71·2	67·0	0·91	N 6 W	4·9
March	76·5	94·3	69·5	81·0	65·7	1·39	S 16 W	5·2
April	83·2	102·3	76·1	88·5	69·1	1·62	S 2 E	6·6
May	85·1	99·8	77·7	88 5	74·6	5·21	S 8 E	7·3
June	83·5	95·2	78·8	86·7	82·9	10·39	S 16 E	6·2
July	82·2	89·8	78·2	86·7	85·8	11·90	S 8 E	4·8
August	82·0	88·8	77·7	83·0	87·8	12·14	S 33 E	4·1
September	82·2	89·3	77·2	83 0	86·0	8·72	S 43 E	4·3
October...	78·9	88·9	72·9	80·4	79·2	4·42	N 3 E	3·0
November	70·1	83·4	62·4	72·3	73·4	0·55	N 2 W	3·1
December	62·0	79·6	54·7	66·2	67 8	0·21	N 9 W	3·3
Year (average) ...	76·3	89·8	70·0	79 3	75·6	58·62	......	4·7

Mean of maxima and minima temperature corrected to true diurnal means by applying the corrections determined from the hourly observation data of Calcutta (Alipore).

CHAPTER II.

HISTORY.

In the early ages the east of the district—a tract only slightly above sea level and intersected by numerous waterways, which was apparently washed then, as now, by the sea and by the Hooghly estuary—was occupied by tribes or communities of fishermen, boatmen and sailors. It is known that at the dawn of history Tāmralipti (the modern Tamlūk) was a great sea port; while the country round it was a stronghold of Kaibarttas, a fishing and boating caste mentioned in the Pillar Edict V of Asoka as Kevata, and in the *Vajasaneyi Samhitā* (Yajur-veda) as Kevartta. The tract along the western border, now known as the Jungle Mahāls, which is still covered with the remains of forest, was the home of nomadic tribes who lived on jungle products and the spoils of the chase. Among them were the Savaras, a powerful race that can be traced as far back as the *Aitareya-Brāhmana*, and other aboriginal tribes, who spread over the country from the Ganges to the Godāvarī. Their descendants may be identified with the nomadic Sahars of the present day and the Lodhās, a tribe of hunters, as their name (a corruption of the Sanskrit *lubdhaka*, *i.e.*, hunters) implies. The remarkable group of memorial pillars at Kiārchand in thāna Gopīballabhpur may possibly date back to this period. Between the Jungle Mahāls and the sea-board lay the routes connecting Magadha and Suhma on the north with Kalinga on the south. It is not clear whether this borderland (*pratyanta-desha*) was included in the empire of Chandragupta (321-297 B.C.), but probably it was, for he took over from his predecessor, Nanda, the sovereignty of the country of the Gangaridæ, *i.e.*, Bengal, which probably included Támralipti. Chandragupta's dominions are, moreover, said to have extended from the Arabian Sea to the Bay of Bengal, and it is not likely that he would have failed to secure such an important port as Tāmralipti.*

EARLY HISTORY.

* V. A. Smith, *Asoka* (1901), p. 69; *Early History of India* (1904), p. 111

Mauryan rule.

However this may be, it seems certain that, on the conquest of Kalinga by his grandson Asoka (*circa* 261 B.C.), the district became part and parcel of the great Mauryan empire and shared in its civilization, Tāmralipti being the principal port on the Bay of Bengal. Asoka himself is said to have erected a stūpa at Tāmralipti,* and the Buddhist legends mention it as the port where travellers landed from and embarked for Ceylon. It was here, they relate, that the nephew and envoys of the king of Ceylon landed on their mission to Asoka; to this port they returned with a branch of the sacred *bo* tree, escorted by an army commanded by Asoka himself; and from it they set sail for Ceylon.†

The Kalingas.

When the Brihadratha, the last Mauryan king, was murdered by his commander-in-chief (*circa* 180 B.C.), the empire was dismembered. Kalinga once more became independent, and, according to the inscription on the elephant cave of Udayagiri in the Purī district, Khāravela, the Kalinga monarch, invaded Magadha and put its ruler to rout. At this time the Kalinga kings may have recovered possession of Midnapore, for in the *Mahābhārata* Kalinga is described as extending southwards from the junction of the Ganges with the sea. At the same time, whether subordinate or independent, the area now included in the district apparently formed part of the kingdom of Tāmralipti, the distinct entity of which is admitted in the same epic.‡

Gupta empire.

The district subsequently passed under the rule of the Gupta emperors. Between 405 and 411 A.D., during the administration of Chandragupta Vikramāditya, it was visited by the Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hian. He described it (Tāmralipti) as a kingdom "at the sea mouth" containing 24 Buddhist monasteries with resident priests, in which the law of Buddha was generally respected. Fa-Hian himself remained here for two years writing copies of the sacred books and drawing image-pictures. He then embarked on a merchant vessel and sailed to Ceylon. From his account it is clear that Tāmralipti was still an important sea port, and this is confirmed by the fact that it is mentioned by Ptolemy (*circa* 150 A.D.) in his geography, being placed by him on the Ganges under the name of ***Tamalites***.

Hiuen Tsiang's account.

After the overthrow of the Guptas, the district appears to have formed part of a kingdom under Deva-rakshita (sixth century A.D. ?), the *Vishnu Purāna* referring to his guarding "the Kosalas,

* S. Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Vol. II, p. 201.

† V. A. Smith, *Asoka*, pp. 166, 168.

‡ Manmohan Chakravarti, *Notes on the Geography of Bengal*, J. A. S. B. 1908, p. 289.

Odras, Tāmraliptas and the sea-coast town." In the seventh century it was conquered by the Bengal king Sasānka, and afterwards by the emperor Harshavardhana, both of whose empires extended as far south as Ganjām. During the rule of the latter (about 640 A.D.) it was visited by the well-known Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsiang (Yuan Chwang). According to his account, the country (Tan-mo-li-ti, *i.e.*, Tāmralipti) was 1,500 or 1,600 *li* (*i.e.*, about 250 miles) in circuit. It was a low-lying country situated on the sea coast, which here formed a bay, with a wet soil and hot climate. The land was regularly cultivated, and produced flowers and fruit in abundance. The people were rich and prosperous owing to their trade, gems and wonderful articles of value being plentiful. They were rude in manners but courageous, and were partly Buddhists, partly heretics. There were 50 Deva (*i.e.*, Brahmanical) temples and 10 Buddhist monasteries with 1,000 priests. The capital, which was near an inlet of the sea, was 10 *li* (2 miles) in circuit, and by its side was a stūpa built by Asoka*. From here Hiuen Tsiang proposed to sail for Ceylon, but was dissuaded on account of the danger of cyclones, and eventually he went by land. Other Chinese travellers also mention the port. I-tsing landed here from China (*circa* 671), and Hur Lun, the Corean, remarked:—"This is the place for embarking for China from East India and close to the sea."†

ORIYA RULE.

The kingdom of Tāmralipti survived for several centuries, but was eventually absorbed in the kingdom of Rādha, *i.e.*, Western Bengal. Between 1021 and 1023 A.D. Rājendra Chola Deva made a raid into the south of Rādha, which was then under a king named Ranasūra, but his raid did not lead to any permanent conquest. A century later, however, Chodaganga Deva defeated the king of Mandār, whose territory appeared to have comprised southern Rādha, and annexed the whole of that country including the Midnapore district. From this time may be dated the beginning of the downfall of the port of Tāmralipti, for it became merely a frontier town of the Ganga kings, subject to attack and devastation.

When the Muhammadans appeared on the scene, they drove the Oriyās gradually southwards, and for a considerable time the river Dāmodar was the boundary between the kingdoms of Bengal and Orissa, Midnapore, with the Arāmbāgh subdivision of the Hooghly district, forming the frontier of the latter kingdom. In the time of Husain Shāh (1493–1518) Arāmbāgh

* S. Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Vol. II, pp. 200, 201; A. Cunningham, *Ancient Geography of India*, p. 504.

† Beal's Life, page 13, and page xxviii (introduction).

was wrested temporarily from the Surjyavansa kings of Orissa, but during the internecine war of the Musalmāns, in the time of Sher Shāh's descendants, the Oriyā king Makunda Harichandan reconquered a part of the Hooghly district up to Tribenī. In 1568 Sulaimān Kararāni, the Afghān king of Bengal, sent a force southwards under his son Bayāzid, who, passing through Jhārkhand, penetrated to the heart of Orissa. The Oriyā king was defeated, and was soon afterwards killed while suppressing a local revolt. Midnapore, with the whole of Orissa up to the Chilka lake, then passed under the sway of the Afghāns.

The rule of the Oriyās thus lasted for about 4½ centuries, and Midnapore, as a frontier tract, was constantly exposed to raids and invasions. Some idea of the internal state of the country during their administration may be gathered from the brief accounts given in the biographies of the great Vaishnava apostle Chaitanya, who, in 1509, passed through the district on his way to Purī. After crossing the Dāmodar and Mantreswar rivers, Chaitanya came to Hājīpur and thence went *viâ* Midnapore and Nārāyangarh to Jaleswar on the Subarnarekhā river. The country appears to have been in a very disturbed state; several Hindu temples lay in ruins; pirates gathered on the rivers and robbers on the land; the villages were few and far between; and the Yavanas were dreaded.* Cultivation evidently had decreased and trade had dwindled, thus helping to complete the ruin of Tamlūk.

AFGHAN RULE.

Midnapore appears to have fared no better under the Afghāns. The few remaining years of Sulaimān's life were spent in suppressing revolts in Orissa, while his son Dāūd Khān became involved in war with the emperor Akbar; and for nearly thirty years the district was the theatre of the struggle between the Afghāns and Mughals for the mastery of Orissa and Bengal. The oppression suffered by the people during these thirty years may, to some extent, be realized from the introduction to the poem *Chandī* by Kavikankan Mukundarām Chakravarti (*circa* 1600), who was himself forced to migrate from his village in Burdwān to Aradā in Midnapore. The ryots suffered from the exactions of the *dihidārs* or village officials, and guards were posted at their doors to prevent them absconding. They could pay only by selling their stock of cattle and paddy, but as all wanted to sell and few could buy, a rupee's worth sold for only ten annas. The *poddārs* or money-changers were death (*Yama*) to the people, for they charged 2½ annas discount on the

* The *Kadchā* of Govinda Dās; *Chaitanya Bhāgavata* of Brindāban Dās; and *Chaitanya Charit-amrita* of Krishna Dās.

rupee, and as usurers they exacted interest of one pie per rupee daily.*

This troubled period began with the revolt of Dāūd Khān in 1574. After the loss of Patna and the capture of his capital, Tanda, by the Mughals, Dāūd Khān retreated from Sātgāon to Din-kasāri (evidently the modern Kesiāri in this district) to collect his scattered forces. Hearing of this, Todar Mal, who had been sent in pursuit, wrote to the Viceroy Munim Khān for reinforcements, which were sent up under Muhammad Kuli Khān Birlās. The combined Mughal forces then marched to Goālpārā (*parganas* Kāsijora and Shāhpur), ten *kos* from Din-kasāri, and Dāūd Khān waited for them at Dhārpur (*pargana* Diparoi?). Todar Mal first sent a detachment of troops against Dāūd's cousin Junaid, who was trying to effect a junction with him, and when they were driven back marched with all his army to their assistance. The Afghāns, unable to face him, fled to the jungles; Dāūd Khān retreated, and Todar Mal halted at Midnapore, where his colleague, Muhammad Kuli Khān, died (December 1574) after a few days' illness. Dissensions now broke out among the Mughal commanders. Todar Mal, dubious of his authority among the Muhammadan nobles, returned to Madāran, only to be deserted by some of his Amīrs. On his reporting the state of affairs to the Viceroy, Munim Khān, other Amīrs were sent to support him, and he then marched to Chitwā (a *pargana* in the Ghātāl subdivision), where he was joined by the Viceroy. Dāūd Khān, who had in the meantime reorganized his army, advanced to meet them, and entrenched himself at Haripur, thus blocking the main road to Orissa, but Munim Khān turned his position. On this, he resolved to give battle.

MUGHAL CONQUEST

The numbers on both sides were nearly equal, but the Afghāns had 200 elephants along their line, with which they hoped to break through the Mughal squadrons and clear the way for their cavalry. The Mughals, on the other hand, had a number of swivels and small cannon mounted on carriages, which soon drove back the elephants in rout. The Afghān horse, however, broke their centre, slew a noted Mughal commander named Khān-i-Alam, and wounded Munim Khān, the Khān-i-Khānan, himself. His horse ran away with him, the Mughal forces fell into confusion, and the day seemed lost. At this juncture, Todar Mal, who commanded the right wing, flung himself on the Afghāns, crying—"What matters it if Khān-i-Alam is dead? Why fear, even if the Khān-i-Khānan has run away? The empire is ours." The

Battle of Mughal-māri.

* *A Glimpse of Bengal in the 16th century*, Calcutta Review, 1891, pp. 352.

Afghāns gave way before his onset and were driven back on the centre, where Dāūd Khān was. Seeing that the battle was going against him and that many of his best officers had been killed, Dāūd Khān lost heart and fled to Cuttack, where in April 1575 he executed a treaty by which he swore allegiance to the emperor and was allowed to retain Orissa. This battle, which took place on the 3rd March 1575, was the first great battle between the Afghāns and the Mughals in Bengal. It extended over some 6 miles, and its site is referred to as Takaroi (the modern Tarkuachaur) in the Akbarnāma, as Bachora in the Tabakati, and as Bichwa by Badāoni, *i.e.*, probably Baryachaur. The battle is still commemorated by the name of a village near the Grand Trunk Road 6 miles north-west of Tarkura village, viz., Mughalmāri, *i.e.*, the Mughals' slaughter; and it is generally known as the battle of Mughalmāri.

Munim Khān having died of fever at Gaur in October 1575, Dāūd Khān again revolted and recovered Bengal. His triumph was, however, short; for, in July 1576, he was defeated at Rājmahāl, captured and executed. The Afghāns, having lost their leader, submitted, but only waited for their opportunity. This soon came with the formidable revolt which broke out in the imperial army in 1580. Taking advantage of this, the Afghāns of Orissa rose under Katlu Khān, and in 1581 overran Orissa and the south-west of Bengal. It took Akbar's generals nearly three years to recover Bihār and the greater part of Bengal from the rebellious Mughals, and in the meantime the Afghāns held the country up to the Dāmodar. At last, in 1583, when the imperial authority had been re-established, a large army was sent to expel them, and Katlu Khān was forced to fall back on Orissa. Next year (1584) the Afghāns again took the field, but on the advance of the Mughal army retreated, hotly pursued, to Takaroi, *i.e.*, Tarkua, and took shelter in the forests of Dharmpur. Soon after this the Viceroy of Bengal made a treaty with Katlu Khān, by which the latter was allowed to retain Orissa, including Midnapore, as a tributary chief.

In 1590 another attempt was made to wrest this part of the country from the Afghāns. Mān Singh, the Governor of Bihār, marched south to invade Orissa, but as the rainy season was approaching, was compelled to canton his army at Jahānābād, the modern Arāmbāgh in the Hooghly district. A detachment he sent forward under his son, Jagat Singh, was defeated, but soon afterwards Katlu Khān, who had advanced to Dharmpur, died, and another treaty was made with the Afghāns. This treaty, like others they had made, was soon broken. The Afghāns having

seized the temple of Jagannāth and occupied the territory of the Rājā of Bishnupur (the modern Bānkurā), Mān Singh again marched against them in November 1592. The Afghāns took up a position in the forests of Midnapore, and a hotly contested battle was fought along the banks of the Subarnarekhā, which ended in their defeat. Mān Singh then marched on to Jaleswar (Jellasore), and by March 1593 had completed the conquest both of Orissa and Midnapore.

As a means of pacifying the country, he transferred a number of Afghāns to *jāgīrs* in *sarkār* Khalifatābād (Khulnā and South Jessore), but this expedient was not successful; for in 1599 the Afghāns of Orissa, taking advantage of his temporary absence from Bengal, revolted under Usmān Shujawāl and once more took possession of Orissa and West Bengal. Mān Singh hurried back from Ajmir, and decisively defeated them at Sherpur Atai (in Bīrbhūm) in 1601. Usmān retreated to Orissa, where ten years later the Afghāns once again endeavoured to recover their lost power. Usmān sallied forth at the head of 20,000 Afghāns, but was defeated and killed in a battle fought on the banks of the Subarnarekhā in 1611. After this, the Afghāns gave no more trouble.

During the Afghān rule, the district appears to have been comprised in two *sarkārs*, viz., Jaleswar and Madāran. Its north-eastern and eastern portions lay within Madāran (*mahāls* Chitwā, Mandalghāt and Hijilī), and the rest of the district, with 23 or 24 *mahāls*, was included, partly or wholly, in *Sarkār* Jaleswar, the land revenue amounting roughly to more than ten lakhs of rupees. The manufacture of salt appears to have been started on the sea-board, but the revenue from that source and from timber and other jungle produce is not known. The chief route was naturally the royal, or Pādshāhi, Road, along which the contending armies marched. From the accounts of their marches we may conclude that this road, starting from Jahānābād, where it was joined by roads from Burdwān and Sātgāon, went south-west to Madāran, thence south-east along the Dwārakeswar river to Chitwā in Dāspur thāna, and thence nearly south to Goālpārā near the modern Pānskurā. From this place it apparently passed due east to Midnapore, following very much the same line as the Grand Trunk Road; and from Midnapore it ran a little to the west of the Orissa Trunk Road, through old villages like Kesiāri and Gaganeswar, until it joined the Subarnarekhā river at Jaleswar.

After the Mughal conquest Midnapore continued to form part of *Sūbah* Orissa, to which a separate governor was sent MUGHAL RULE.

direct from the imperial court in the time of Jahāngīr. In the reign of Shāh Jahān, Orissa was placed under the control of his second son, Shāh Shujā, who was appointed Governor of Bengal. During the second viceroyalty of this prince (1646-58) a resettlement of Bengal and Orissa took place, in which *sarkār* Jaleswar was cut off from Orissa and annexed to Bengal. It was now subdivided into six *sarkārs*, Goālpārā, Māljyāthā (with the salt *mahāls*), Majkuri, Jaleswar, Remunā and Bastā, the last three lying chiefly in the modern district of Balasore. The main object of this measure was apparently to protect the coast, which was exposed to the raids of Portuguese and Arakan pirates, by bringing it within the scope of the operations of the imperial fleet (*nawāra*), which had its head-quarters at Dacca.

European trade.

During this period trade appears to have flourished. Tamlūk, it is true, had lost its old importance, but Hijilī had become a great trade centre, described as follows by Ralph Fitch in 1586:— "To this haven of Angeli came every year many ships out of India, Negapatam, Sumatra, Malacca and divers other places, and lade from thence great store of rice and much cloth of cotton, wool, and sugar and long pepper, great store of butter, and other victuals." The Portuguese had an agency at Hijilī, from which, however, they were ousted by the Mughals in 1636*; and in the second quarter of the seventeenth century the Dutch began to trade there. The English appeared as rivals in the latter half of that century, the larger English vessels loading and unloading at Hijilī on account of the dangers of navigation on the Hooghly. Later on, the English began to trade in the interior, especially at Chandrakonā (for sugar)† and at Rādhānagar, which, according to Alexander Hamilton (*circa* 1720), was "famous for manufacturing cotton cloth and silk *romaals* or handkerchiefs." The French and Dutch also sent agents to the Ghātāl subdivision, but their trade was not nearly so large as that of the English.

The trade along the sea-board is referred to as follows by Valentyn (1724):—"Hingeli was formerly one of our (Dutch) chief settlements, and the Portuguese also had here their quarters and a church. Rice and other articles were chiefly sold here, as also at Kindua, Kenka and Badrek, but we afterwards abandoned all these places. Tamboli and Banzia are two villages where the Portuguese have their church and their southern trade. There is much dealing in wax here." From this it appears that Tamlūk (Tamboli) had not been altogether abandoned, and still contained a Portuguese settlement. This is confirmed by Gamelli Careri,

* W. Hedges' *Diary*, Yule, Vol. II, page 240.

† C. R. Wilson, *Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, Volume II.

who visited India in 1695 and wrote that the Portuguese "further subdued . . . Tambulin in the kingdom of Bengala."

Tamlūk appears also to have been a slave market, referred to as follows in the Persian account of Shihāb-ud-dīn Tālish (*circa* 1665). "From the reign of the emperor Akbar, when Bengal was annexed to the Mughal empire, to the time of the conquest of Chātgāon (Chittagong) during the viceroyalty of Shaista Khān, Arakan pirates, both Magh and Feringhi, used constantly to come by the water-route and plunder Bengal. They carried off the Hindus and Muslims, male and female, great and small, few and many, that they could seize, pierced the palms of their hands, pressed thin canes through the holes, and threw them one above another under the deck of their ships. In the same manner as grain is flung to fowl, every morn and evening they threw down from above uncooked rice to the captives as food. Sometimes they brought the captives for sale at a high price to Tamlūk and the port of Baleswar (Balasore), which is a part of the imperial dominions and a dependency of the province of Orissa. The manner of the sale was this. The wretches used to bring the prisoners in their ships, anchor at a short distance from the shore of Tamlūk or Baleswar, and send a man ashore with the news. The local officers, fearing lest the pirates should commit any depredation or kidnapping there, stood on the shore with a number of followers, and sent a man with a sum of money to the pirates. If the terms were satisfactory, the pirates took the money and sent the prisoners with the man. Only the Feringhi pirates sold their prisoners."*

Prince Khurram's march.

During the seventeenth century the tranquillity of the district appears to have been disturbed on only three occasions. The first was in 1622, when Prince Khurram (afterwards the emperor Shāh Jahān) revolted against his father and marched northwards from the Deccan through Orissa and Midnapore, driving Ahmed Beg Khān, the Governor of Orissa, before him to Burdwān. Having taken that town, the Prince defeated and killed the Nawāb, Ibrāhim Khān, and for two years was master of Bengal. In 1624, however, he was defeated near Allahābād by the imperial forces and then fled to the Deccan through Midnapore.

Siege of Hijili.

The second occasion was when war broke out between the English and the Nawāb. Charnock, after abandoning Hooghly, moved down the Hooghly and, having destroyed the fort of Tanna, sent Captain Nicholson with one-half of his forces and the fleet to take possession of Hijilī. This he did easily enough, for the island with its fort and batteries had been deserted by the Musalmāns. Charnock himself arrived

* *The Feringhi Pirates of Chatgaon*, J. A. S. B., 1907, page 422.

there with the rest of the forces on 27th February 1687 and, anticipating attack, began to fortify the island. The following account of the siege which ensued is quoted from Sir W. W. Hunter's *History of British India*:—

"A high dyke, like the rampart round a Roman encampment, now encircles Hijilī and defends it from inundation. It was then an island swamp, separated by channels from the main land, and but half rescued from the sea; 'having a great store of wild hogs, deer, wild buffaloes and tigers,' very fertile at places above the water-level, yet so unhealthy that it had passed into a native proverb.* In 'that direful place,' as Charnock calls it, he and his hunted four hundred seized a little fort, a mere shell surrounded by a thin wall now nearly submerged by the river, but with their ships in front and creeks all round. The Viceroy's army of 12,000 men closed in behind, cut off supplies, pounded the garrison with cannon across a too narrow creek, and forced our ships from their anchorage. On May 28th, 1687, the besiegers were only driven out of the trenches by desperate fighting.

"Our starving men could do no more. In the three months Charnock had buried two hundred soldiers, another hundred lay sick or wounded, only one hundred remained able to bear arms, many of them tottering invalids, almost all emaciated with fever and ague. Of forty officers, only himself, one lieutenant and four sergeants were alive and fit for duty. His principal ship sprang another great leak, not one of the others was half-manned, and the end seemed to have come, when a vessel carrying the English colours hove in sight with seventy fresh men on board. By an audacious stratagem, Charnock magnified his reinforcements into a new army, and displayed a delusive show of strength with banners, trumpets, drums and loud huzzas. The Mughal general, completely deceived, held back, and on June 4th sent a flag of truce. Charnock, who had been the soul of the defence, now obtained an honourable capitulation. The general agreed to procure the Viceroy's acceptance of the twelve articles of January, and on June 11th Charnock marched out the remnant of his men, gaunt and ragged, yet with drums beating and colours flying."

Subha Singh's revolt.

The third and last occasion that the district was exposed to war during this century was in 1696. Subha Singh, zamindār of Chitwā and Bārdā (two *parganas* in the Ghātāl subdivision), broke out in rebellion and was joined by a contingent of Afghāns under Rahim Khān. The allied forces defeated the Rājā of

* It is one thing to go to Hijili, but quite another to come back alive."

Burdwān, and then besieged and took the fort at Hooghly. In a short time the rebels overran the whole of West Bengal from Midnapore to Rājmahāl, and at length, crossing the river, harried Central Bengal including Murshidābād. Subha Singh was killed by the daughter of the Burdwān Rājā, whom he tried to ravish, and was succeeded by his brother Himat Singh. After ravaging the country for some time, they were defeated near Bhagwāngolā (Murshidābād) by the newly appointed *Faujdār*, Zabardast Khān, and were driven to the west of the Bhāgīrathī river. There they continued their depredations; and when Prince Azīm-us-Shān, who had been appointed Governor of Bengal, arrived at Burdwān, they attacked him. In this battle Rahim Khān was killed, and his forces were routed. The rebel Afghāns were then hunted down, and peace was again restored to the country.

Administrative changes.

In the beginning of the eighteenth century some important administrative changes were carried out during the vigorous rule of Jāfar Khān, *alias* Murshid Kulī Khān, who was first appointed *Dīwān* of Bengal and Orissa, and next became Deputy Nāzim, and then Nāzim, of the two provinces. He carried out an important settlement of the province in 1722 and grouped Bengal in thirteen large divisions, called *chaklās*. The area included in this district was divided between *chaklās* Hijilī (including the salt *mahāls*), Hooghly and Burdwān, besides the zamīndāri of Tamlūk; these *chaklās* were again subdivided into a large number of *parganas*.

Alī Vardi Khān.

During the rule of Alī Vardi Khān the district was again harassed by continual warfare. Scarcely had he obtained the Nawābship of Bengal than he marched (in 1740) against Murshid Kulī Khān, Governor of Orissa, who had refused to acknowledge his suzerainty. At Midnapore he secured the adherence of the zamīndārs by means of *khilats* and gifts;* then moving on to Jaleswar, he forced the passage of the Subarnarekhā river against some troops of the Rājā of Mayūrbhanj, and in February 1741 decisively defeated Murshid Kuli Khān. After this he took possession of Orissa, and marched back; but soon after he had left, Murshid's son-in-law imprisoned his deputy, and Alī Vardi Khān had to march again to Cuttack through Midnapore. The campaign was short but successful, and Alī Vardi, anticipating no danger, disbanded his new levies and permitted a large number of his soldiers to return to their homes. He himself, with a force of only 5,000 or 6,000 men, marched back leisurely, "hunting, sporting and seeing the country."

* *Riyāzu-s-Salātin* (translation), page 327.

Marāthā wars.

When he was near Midnapore, word was brought in that a force of 40,000 Marāthā horse under Bhāskar Pandit were within 40 miles and advancing rapidly. The Nawāb, who was then at his midday prayers, at once replied :—"Where are the infidels, and where is the spot where I cannot chastise them?" He soon found that his boast was vain, for the Marāthās, having made their way through Mayūrbhanj and Pachet, were moving towards Burdwān, to the relief of which he hastened back. There he was attacked by the Marāthās, and had to beat a retreat to Kātwā and thence to Murshidābād, which he reached in April 1742, only to find that the Marāthās had already sacked its suburbs. Soon after this, the Marāthās captured Hooghly, and the Nawāb "whose forces had been greatly reduced both by a campaign of twelve months and by labour, sickness and famine, concluded that, as the rainy season was at hand, it would be too late to think of driving the Marāthās out of his country; and that the only part left for him was conserving the city| and its territory." The Marāthās took advantage of his inaction and spread far and wide over the country. The *Faujdār* of Midnapore, Mīr Kalandar, it is said, found means to secure his fort, but the whole of the district, and indeed the whole of Bengal west of the Ganges, passed into the hands of the Marāthās.

In October 1742, after the rains were over, Alī Vardi Khān sallied forth with a large force and drove the invaders before him. The Marāthās evacuated Midnapore and the other districts they had seized, Bhāskar retreating through Pachet, where his troops lost their way in the forest. Bhāskar, realizing that it was impossible to get through to his own country (Nāgpur), left the management of the march to his ally, Mīr Habib. The latter led them to "the woods of Bishnupur (Bānkurā), from whence he proceeded through the plain of Chandrakonā and at last emerged near Midnapore." Then, hearing that Alī Vardi Khān was still pursuing them, the Marāthās retreated from Midnapore to Orissa.

In 1747 Alī Vardi Khān, determined to expel the Marāthās from Orissa, made Mīr Jāfar Khān *Faujdār* of Midnapore and Hijili, and placed him in command of 7,000 horse and 12,000 foot. Mīr Jāfar, on arriving at Midnapore, defeated a body of Marāthās and Afghāns, who fled to Jaleswar. Then, hearing that Jānojī was marching against him with a large army, he retreated without striking another blow to Burdwān, pursued by the Marāthā van-guard. Next year we find that Jānojī retired to Midnapore on the approach of the rains and cantoned his troop

there. In 1749 he again fell back on it, but soon marched off to Nāgpur leaving a detachment under Mīr Habib.

In 1750 Alī Vardi Khān once more marched to Midnapore, where the Marāthās did not venture to give him battle but retired to Cuttack. He crossed the Kasai without opposition, and "resolved to secure the passes so well, that his obstinate enemies should find it difficult to penetrate into his dominions for the future. He therefore determined to pass the season at Midnapore, where he ordered his troops to barrack themselves; and where he gave the *Faujdāri* of that place and country to Alā Kuli Khān, commander of Sirāj-ud-daula's brigade". Sirāj-ud-daula himself was sent with a detachment to Balasore, from which he soon returned after a successful expedition. "The two armies joined at Nārāyangarh; and Sirāj-ud-daula, having hastened to embrace the feet of his grandfather, filled the old man's heart with inexpressible joy." The two armies then cantoned at Midnapore, but Alī Vardi soon had to leave on receiving news that the Marāthās had got behind him and were marching on Murshidābād. The marauders having evaded his pursuit, he marched back to Midnapore, and, not being able to get intelligence of the Marāthās' movements, encamped in his old cantonments.

The dispositions he made are thus described in the *Sair-ul-Mutākharin*:—"As the possession of the castle of that place seemed to have been all along their (the Marāthās') main object, and Haidar Alī Khān, the governor of it, seemed for want of a sufficient force incapable to preserve that stronghold from those invaders, the Viceroy resolved to pass the season in it; and, having ordered that the place and other buildings there should be put in repair and even enlarged, he sent for his veiled ones from Murshidābād and published that the army ought to provide themselves with necessaries to pass the rainy season in that neighbourhood. This order could not fail to constern both the officers and soldiers, who, tired with the length of this campaign, expected to return home at the beginning of the rains. They now lost the hope of meeting their families this year; but yet submitted to their fate, and everyone commenced providing himself with a *cahut* and some covering of thatch or straw. Some days passed in this manner, every one thinking they would now repose for a whole season." Their hopes were frustrated, for news came that Sirāj-ud-daula had set out for Patna, intending to set himself up as an independent ruler. Thereupon, Alī Vardi went off post-haste to Murshidābād and thence to Patna, leaving the command of the army to Mīr Jāfar Khān and Rājā Dulab Rām. Next year (1751), weary of the war, he made peace with the Marāthās. A

treaty was concluded, by which he relinquished to them the province of Orissa, as demarcated by the river Subarnarekhā, for payment of the arrears due to the troops of Rājā Raghujī Bhonsla; and over and above this assignment, he agreed to pay yearly twelve lakhs of rupees to the Rājā's agents, on condition that the Marāthās should not again set foot in his territory*. The Subarnarekhā was not, however, the real boundary, as the Marāthās held territory north-east of the river in *parganas* Bhogrāi, Kamardā, Patāspur and Shāhbanda, and in several villages of the present thāna of Gopīballabhpur.

Last days of Mughal rule.

The district does not again come into prominence till 1757 when the *Faujdār* was Rājārām Singh, who had been chief of Sirāj-ud-daula's Intelligence Department and is frequently referred to in the English records as "The Nabob's head spy."† Being in arrears with the revenue of Midnapore, he was ordered by Mīr Jāfar Khān to come to Murshidābād and give an account of his government. Although strongly advised by Rājā Dulab Rām to comply, he sent his brother and nephew in his place, who were immediately thrown into prison—a proceeding which Mīr Jāfar Khān justified to Clive by representing that Rājārām Singh had been an active enemy of the English and the medium of communication between the late Nawāb and Monsieur Bussy.‡ Upon this, the *Faujdār* gathered his troops, amounting to 2,000 horse and 5,000 foot, and wrote to Clive that, if he was attacked, he would take refuge in the jungles of his district, and hold out to the last. At the same time he promised, if Clive would guarantee his safety, to pay homage in person and make over to the Nawāb a lakh of rupees. Clive, who was desirous to preserve tranquillity, urged the Nawāb to accede to these terms and agree to a reconciliation. This advice was apparently not taken, for a force was sent to Midnapore to crush the *Faujdār*. Soon afterwards, however, a reconciliation was effected, for Clive persuaded Rājārām Singh to come from Midnapore and visit him, sending European troops to escort him from Pipli. Clive having guaranteed his personal safety, the *Faujdār* accompanied this force to Murshidābād.§

* *Sair-ul-Mutākharin* (translation, Calcutta, 1902), Vol. I, pages 376, 395, 405; Vol. II, pages 23, 87, 90, 91, 93, 94, 112, 113; Stewart's *History of Bengal* (1847), pages 283-88, 294, 295, 300-302.

† C. R. Hill, *Bengal in 1756-57*, Vol. I, pages xlvi, 100, 120; Vol. II, pages 22, 137, 149.

‡ This allegation appears to have been true. See *Bengal in 1756-57*, Vol. II, pages 313, 314.

§ Broome's *History of the Bengal Army*, pages 183, 186, 187, 189.

In March 1760, during the invasion of the Emperor Shāh Alam, the Marāthās again appeared in Midnapore under the command of Sheobat, "a chief who appears to have been ever ready to take advantage of any troubles in Bengal." Giving out that he came to support the cause of the Emperor, he defeated Khushiāl Singh, the Nawāb's officer in charge of Midnapore, and made himself master of the neighbourhood. He then pushed forward detachments to Khīrpai and Bishnupur; from the former place he threatened Calcutta and Hooghly; from the latter he commanded Burdwān and secured the means of joining the Emperor in the event of his advancing towards Murshidābād. These proceedings caused considerable alarm in Calcutta, where the militia were called out. All armed natives not in the Company's service were also ordered to quit the settlement, for it was reported that Rājā Dulab Rām, who was then in Calcutta with a large body of followers, was in communication with Sheobat, and had instigated his advance. The Emperor, however, afraid to meet an English force which was sent against him, marched back to Patna; and in November 1760 Captain Martin White was sent, with a detachment of Europeans and sepoys and some artillery, to Midnapore, "which province he speedily brought into order after very little resistance." *

EARLY BRITISH ADMINISTRATION.

Shortly before this, the district had been ceded to the British by a treaty dated 27th September 1760, by which Mīr Kāsim Alī in return for his appointment as Nawāb Nāzim, made a grant to the East India Company of the three districts of Chittagong, Burdwān and Midnapore. All the district as now constituted did not, however, come under British rule, for the Patāspur *pargana* was in the possession of the Marāthās, who also held Orissa. The English territory was divided into three great divisions, viz., the *faujdāri* of Hijilī, and the *chaklās* of Midnapore and Jaleswar (Jellasore). The *faujdāri* of Hijilī, which was at this time attached to Hooghly, comprised the whole of *sarkār* Māljyāthā, four salt *mahāls* in *sarkār* Jaleswar, and one large zamīndāri (Tamlūk) in *sarkār* Goālpārā. *Chaklā* Midnapore comprised the rest of *sarkār* Goālpārā; some of the *mahāls* in that *sarkār* (*e.g.*, Raipur, Barābhūm, Ghātsila and other jungly *mahāls* in the north-west) were subsequently detached from Midnapore and are now included in the districts of Bānkurā, Mānbhūm and Singhbhūm. *Chaklā* Jaleswar included the rest of the *mahāls* in *sarkār* Jaleswar north of the Subarnarekhā river, some of which (Bhogrāi and others) now form part of the Balasore district. The *chaklās* of Midnapore and Jaleswar were placed under an officer, designated

* Broome's *History of the Bengal Army*, pages 289-95, 319.

the Resident, whose duties were decidedly varied, for he was at once the head of the revenue, criminal and judicial administration and also did the work of Commercial Agent, Political Officer and Military Governor.

For three years (May 1774 to April 1777) Midnapore was directly under the Provincial Council of Burdwān, but in 1777 the supervision of revenue collections was entrusted to a separate officer, designated Collector, while another official was appointed Commercial Resident. In 1781 two important changes were introduced. The controlling revenue authority, the Provincial Council of Burdwān, was abolished, and its powers were transferred to the Committee of Revenue at Calcutta, now called the Board of Revenue. For the trial of civil suits, a civil court (Dīwāni Adālat) was established at Midnapore, the Judge being also Police Magistrate, in which capacity he was authorized to arrest offenders, but not to try them: he was, in fact, not a Magistrate, but merely a police officer, until four years later, when he was given power to try petty offences. In 1787, all the three offices of Collector, Judge and Police Magistrate were vested in the same person, but this arrangement lasted only for a short time, as a separate Collector was appointed by 1793. The offices of Judge and Magistrate were, however, usually held by one person, who, in his capacity of Magistrate, committed serious cases to the native criminal courts (Faujdāri Adālat). In 1791 the latter were replaced by Courts of Circuit, the Judge of the Court of Circuit for the Calcutta division holding periodical sessions at Midnapore; under Lord Cornwallis' scheme of 1793, the designation of the civil court (Dīwāni Adālat) was changed to Zilā Court.

The *faujdāri* of Hijilī was subdivided into the two salt divisions of Tamlūk and Hijilī, each under a Salt Agent, who was subordinate to the Collector of the Salt Districts. Each Agent also did some revenue work and disposed of petty criminal cases, more heinous cases being committed to, and tried by, the Faujdāri Adālat at Calcutta which, as stated above, was replaced by the Court of Circuit in 1791. In 1793 several important changes were introduced. The office of Collector of the Salt Districts was abolished; and orders were issued that the Salt Agents were to be divested of their powers as revenue and judicial officers, which were to be transferred to the Collector and the Judge-Magistrate of Midnapore. The charge of revenue collections was not, however, actually transferred till September 1796; and about 1800, the salt divisions appear to have been transferred to the Hooghly district: it was, in fact, not until 1836 that they became permanently part of Midnapore.

Thānas Ghātāl and Chandrakonā formed part of the Hooghly district for a long time after 1795, when that district was first created. In 1826 the criminal jurisdiction of Chandrakonā was transferred to Midnapore as the result of a petition from a large number of its inhabitants, but no change was made in its revenue jurisdiction. In 1837, however, both the thānas appear in the Hooghly district figures, and they were finally transferred to Midnapore in 1872. *Pargana* Bhogrāi and two other *parganas* of Hijilī had been added to Balasore before 1836, and in 1870 Jaleswar and its neighbourhood were also transferred to the latter district. The Jungle Mahāls on the western border, most of which were dependent on the Midnapore zamindāri, were brought under direct control between 1767 and 1770; and two police thānas were established at Janpur in Baliabera and at Balarāmpur. Several of these *mahāls* now belong to other districts, *e.g.*, Phulkusuma, Raipur, Ambikānagar (called in old records Amainagar), Chhātna and Supur to the Bānkurā district, Mānbhūm and Barābhūm to the Mānbhūm district, and Ghātsila to the Singhbhūm district. For a brief sketch of their administrative history the reader is referred to the article on Jungle Mahāls in Chapter XV.

In the early days of British administration, Midnapore had little tranquillity, for, being a border district, it was liable to invasion by the Marāthās, while its western portion was covered with jungle and inhabited by predatory tribes. What with the inroads, or the threatened inroads, of the Marāthās and of the levies of the Mayūrbhanj Rājā, the forcible exactions of armed *sannyāsis* and *fakīrs*, the raids of the aboriginal tribes (generally known as Chuārs), and the turbulence of the jungle chiefs and their adherents, the country, more especially to the west and south, was continually disturbed. Even as late as 1800, after nearly forty years of British occupation, a Collector reported that two-thirds of Midnapore consisted of jungle, the greater part of which was uninhabited and inaccessible. For the protection of the district, sepoys were garrisoned in the fort at Midnapore and in Fort Knox near Jaleswar.

Relations with the Marāthās.

The Marāthās gave trouble from the start and overran part of the district when the first Resident, Mr. Johnstone, was in charge of it. In December 1764 they took the field in order to reduce some subordinate zamindārs, and a detachment had to be sent to Jaleswar to check any attempts they might make to cross the frontier. In April 1767 one Subhet (Sheobat?) collected a body of men with seven guns at Patāspur, and sent emissaries to induce sepoys to desert from the Company's

service. In June 1770 the zamīndār of Shāhbandar sent a body of his *paiks* to Napochar in British territory, surrounded the houses and *golās* of the rice-dealers, and extorted what he claimed as arrears of rice duty.

For the next twenty years there were frequent disputes with the Marāthās on the south-west frontier, and the military were constantly called into requisition to repel their raids and to protect the Company's ryots. In March 1799, for instance, one Paikra Bhuiyā, a Marāthā zamīndār, entered *pargana* Naurangachaur with about 900 armed men and plundered several villages. He repeated the raid in the May following, when he and other *sardārs* on horseback led 1,600 armed Marāthās at night across the Subarnarekhā into the same *pargana*. Having been reinforced by one Bīr Prasād Chaudhri of Balarāmpur, who brought a contingent of 300 matchlock-men, the Marāthās surrounded the sepoy guards at the two villages of Susania and Nalpura. They commenced their attack two hours before daybreak, and the battle raged till sunset, when the guards retreated, having expended the whole of their ammunition. The Marāthās thereupon sacked the abandoned villages, set fire to them, and carried off all the cattle and also the heads of their opponents who had fallen in the engagement. The Magistrate, in reporting the raid to Government, recommended that representations should be made to the Marāthā agent in Calcutta and full redress demanded, or one full company and a piece of ordnance should be stationed in the neighbourhood. He further stated that the Marāthās should be driven out of Ulmāra, which was the starting point from which they commenced their depredations, and that an expedition should be organized to take possession of it.

The Marāthās in Patāspur also gave trouble in the same year. The zamīndār of *pargana* Partabhan reported that the Marāthās from Patāspur were daily seizing, confining, and extorting money from, the ryots residing in the Company's territories. The Magistrate wrote to the Marāthā *tahsīldār* of Patāspur, but the letter was returned unopened, and the bearer told that no consideration would be paid to it. Not unnaturally, the Magistrate thought it necessary for the immediate security of the ryots to send a party of sepoys to prevent any further outrages on British subjects.

This *pargana*, surrounded as it was by British territory, was an Alsatia for robbers, criminals and smugglers. The resultant state of things was thus described in a letter of the magistrate dated 31st July 1800 :—" The Mahratta pergunnahs contain a

very considerable number of dacoits—some of them well known as such; others are more secret. Most of the proprietors of land and of those who possess wealth or influence in these pergunnahs are either dacoits themselves or connected with dacoits. Some of the persons employed by the Mahratta Government in the pretended administration of justice or in the collection of revenue are connected with dacoits and salt smugglers, receive as the reward of their assistance or connivance considerable contributions, and in some instance a share of the actual plunder. Dacoits, Chuārs and plunderers of every description retire to this territory and occasionally return to commit depredations. Their inducements to reside there are the facility of pursuing their occupations of pillage and at the same time evading justice. Hence this part of the Mahratta territory is much better cultivated than the Company's lands which surround it. The lawless and turbulent Mahratta subjects are well protected in their persons and property, while I am conscious of my inability to afford the same protection to the peaceful and industrious inhabitants of this zillah. Criminals of every description, whose aim it is to evade justice, convicts escaped from jail, deserters, persons who have resisted judicial process and who are outlawed, to which may be added insolvent debtors and persons charged with crimes who fear to stand their trial, find an asylum in the heart of the Company's territories." The Magistrate wrote further that complaints of carrying off cattle from the neighbouring villages were very frequent, and the injured applied to him in vain for redress. A large quantity of salt was manufactured by the Marāthās, and the whole of it was smuggled to, and sold in, the Company's territory, to the great loss of the revenues of Government.*

An endeavour to remedy this state of affairs was made as early as May 1767, when Mr. Vansittart, the Resident of Midnapore, suggested to the President of the Council at Fort William that Bhelorachaur, south of the Subarnarekhā river, should be exchanged for Patāspur, in order to avoid disputes and make the English possessions more compact. In reply, the President, Mr. Verelst, wrote that negotiations regarding the whole of Orissa were in progress, and if it were necessary, Patāspur would be put in charge of the Resident at Midnapore. These negotiations, which had been started by Lord Clive in 1766, were unsuccessful. Subsequently, Warren Hastings tried to get a lease of the Orissa coast from the Bhonsla, but was also unsuccessful. The Marāthā possessions in Midnapore

* J. C. Price, *Notes on the History of Midnapore* 876), pages 28-29.

and the adjoining tracts were at this time under the *Faujdār* of Balasore, and to guard their interests the East India Company had a Resident at Balasore, who also acted as postmaster and as agent for Marāthā salt. This arrangement continued till the British conquest of Orissa in 1803. In September of that year Colonel Fergusson's detachment at Jaleswar marched towards Balasore, of which they took possession without loss; and at the same time a small force occupied Patāspur. By the treaty concluded in the same year, that *pargana* was ceded to the English with Orissa.

Relations with Mayūrbhanj. Further trouble was caused by the Rājā of Mayūrbhanj, who was nominally subject to the Marāthā Governor at Cuttack. The Rājā held the *pargana* of Nayābasān (in the Jungle Mahāls of Midnapore) as a revenue-paying estate and quite distinct from his independent territory. Great difficulty was experienced in realizing the Government demands from him, and the records contain frequent allusions to raids and depredations committed by his levies upon the cultivators in the more settled parts of the district. In 1782 he set up a claim to the proprietary right of Bhelorachaur (a *pargana* now within the district of Balasore), but his claims were rejected by the Governor-General. In October 1783 the Collector of Midnapore reported that he was assisting another insurgent chief and raising an army for the invasion of the Company's districts. The Company thereupon concerted a plan of joint hostilities with the Marāthā Governor of Orissa, Rājā Rām Pandit, against the Mayūrbhanj Rājā, who a few months afterwards made his submission and agreed to pay a yearly revenue of Rs. 3,200 for his estate in Midnapore.

Sannyāsis. Bands of wandering *sannyāsis* or religious mendicants also helped to keep the country in a disturbed state. They travelled from place to place, chiefly from one sacred site to another, in large armed bands, often numbering several thousands. They were composed mostly of up-country people, but on the way their numbers were swelled by local recruits and bad characters. During their journeys they extorted money and food from the well-to-do villagers, forcibly looted granaries and houses, and ill-treated all who opposed them, in some cases beating them to death. The early British records contain many references to their incursions,* from which it appears that they travelled chiefly in Northern and Eastern Bengal; but as Midnapore lay on the way to Purī, it did not escape their visitations. In February 1773 a body of *sannyāsis* was reported in the neighbourhood of

* *Bengal Manuscript Records*, Vol. IV, index to the word *Sannyāsis*.

Khirpāi (Ghātāl subdivision), and the Government issued orders to the Resident to do his utmost to destroy them, take them prisoners, or expel them from the country. In March of that year another band, said to number 3,000, was reported to be in Raipur (now in Bānkurā), and Captain Forbes was sent against them, while the local zamīndārs were directed to assist him with all their available forces. The *sannyāsis*, however, escaped, passing through the Jungle Mahāls from Phulkusuma to Silda, and thence to Alampur and Gopīballabhpur along the border of the Marāthā territory, too far from Midnapore for the authorities to intercept the main body. A detachment under Captain Edwards succeeded in coming up with some of them in June 1773, but the encounter ended in his defeat.

In October of the same year, two bodies of *sannyāsis* were reported to be marching northwards from Balasore. Lieutenant Hearsey at Jaleswar was directed to prevent their entering the district by the Jaleswar road, and half a company was sent to reinforce him. The *sannyāsis*, however, divided their forces and, turning off along the jungle roads, eluded the troops. In November their arrival in Mayūrbhanj was reported, and Captain Thomson was deputed with three companies and two field-pieces to intercept them, if they tried to pass through British territory. This they did not attempt to do, but marched away to the hills on their way to Prayāg (Allahābād).

The Chuārs.

The most persistent disturbers of the peace, however, were the Chuārs. This term signifies in Bengali "an outlandish fellow," and was applied in Midnapore to the wild tribes who inhabited the Jungle Mahāls and the tracts beyond them. The following *parganas*, all of which are situated in the west or north-west of the district, were included in the Jungle Mahāls:—Brāhmanbhūm, Bāgri, Bhanjabhūm, Bahādurpur, Dharinda, Diparoi, Chiara, Nayābasān, Bāliabera, Jhārgrām, Jāmbani, Kalyānpur, Silda or Jhatibani, Rohini-Mabhandār, Dipa Kiārchand, Lālgarh or Sankakulia, and Rāmgarh. This tract of country is of considerable extent, and at the end of the eighteenth century was covered with wide stretches of jungle, its inhabitants being mostly *pāiks* and Chuārs, careless cultivators but expert in pillage. The lands were held under a kind of feudal tenure by the *sardārs*, *pāiks* and others, who paid quit-rents and were ready to turn out for a raid at short notice. The jungle chiefs or zamīndārs, moreover, were a turbulent and independent class, described as follows in 1778:—"These zamīndārs are mere freebooters who plunder their neighbours and one another; and their tenants are banditti, whom they chiefly employ in their

outrages. These depredations keep the zamīndārs and their servants continually in arms; for after the harvest is gathered, there is scarcely one of them who does not call his tenants together, either to defend his own property or attack his neighbour."

The necessity of bringing these chiefs to book was realized at an early date. In March 1766 Government resolved to send an expedition into the country west and north-west of Midnapore in order to coerce them into paying revenue, and to capture and demolish as many of their strongholds as possible. Owing to the difficulty of collecting a sufficient number of sepoys, the expedition was put off till January 1767, when it was despatched under Ensign (afterwards Lieutenant) Fergusson, who set out with three or four companies of sepoys and a European sergeant or two. On 4th February he reached Kalyānpur, where the zamīndār acknowledged his dependence and agreed to pay a higher revenue. The Jhārgrām zamīndār proved refractory, upon which Fergusson proceeded against his fort, which he took on 6th February. The zamīndār then submitted, and on his giving security and agreeing to pay a higher revenue, the fort was restored to him. Fergusson was equally successful with the zamīndārs of Rāmgarh, Lālgarh, Jāmbani and Silda, who came in and engaged to pay an adequate revenue. In this expedition Fergusson was accompanied by contingents from the Midnapore and Dharinda *parganas*, the former supplying 50 horse and 400 to 500 foot. In 1767 he went further afield and was engaged in establishing the British authority in the Jungle Mahāls now included in Singhbhūm, Mānbhūm and Bānkurā.

In December 1769, and again in November 1770, the Chuārs of the hills between Ghātsila and Barābhūm broke out, but did not make any raid into Midnapore. In fact, most of the early depredations of the Chuārs took place outside the Midnapore district; but as the hilly tract to the west as far as Singhbhūm was attached to the district, forces had to be sent from Midnapore to quell the disturbances and keep the Chuārs in order. These expeditions gave a great deal of trouble and were attended with some loss from the Chuārs' arrows, but more from illness.

Towards the close of the century the Chuārs broke out in open rebellion and extended their raids to the heart of the district. The outbreak began in April 1798, when two villages were burnt down in Silda. In the following month the Chuārs took the field in Raipur (now in Bānkurā district); and in July 400 banditti under a Bāgdi leader appeared in thāna Chandrakonā. After this, predatory bands laid waste the country in many different parts of

the district, *e.g.*, *parganas* Kāsijora, Tamlūk (Bāsudebpur), Tarkuāchaur and Jaleswar, but the west of Midnapore suffered most from their savage raids. In September the Chuārs were reported to be pillaging Nayābasān and Barajit, and in December they took possession of six or seven villages, and sacked fifteen more. One band was at work 10 miles from Balarāmpur; Rājgarh was plundered and burnt, and daily depredations were committed near Sālbani, a village which they eventually pillaged. *Pargana* Midnapore itself was laid waste, and the Chuārs carried their devastations from thāna Nārāyangarh on the south to *pargana* Bhanjabhūm on the north. The ryots dared not cut their crops and streamed into Midnapore, Anandapur and other places protected by the Company's sepoys.

In the vicinity of the town of Midnapore there were three places where the Chuārs assembled in force, viz., Bahādurpur, Sālbani and Karnagarh, the last place being the residence of the Rānī of Midnapore, whose zamīndāri had been brought under *khās* management. From these places they started on their various raids in search of plunder, returning to divide the spoil; and the Collector was of opinion that if they were freed from the presence of the Chuārs—a measure which, he thought, could be easily effected—tranquillity could be restored in a few days. However, whether it was owing to certain differences that had unfortunately arisen at this crisis between the Collector, Mr. Julius Mihoff, and the Judge-Magistrate, Mr. Robert Gregory, or perhaps because there was an insufficient body of troops stationed at Midnapore, no effective steps appear to have been taken to check the Chuārs, who went on plundering as before.

By the end of February they had pushed their incursions so far, that several villages contiguous to the town of Midnapore were laid waste and burnt, and the robbers had even the audacity to threaten to plunder and burn the town itself when the nights became dark. The Collector feared that the Chuārs would succeed in robbing the treasury; for his guard of *sebandis* had been reduced to 27 men, and he thought that, if they were attacked, they would make no resistance. On the 7th March he reported to the Board:—"No steps have been taken to disperse the Chuārs; on the contrary, they are daily committing the greatest outrages, to enumerate which would be intruding on the Board. The ryots of whole villages are daily coming into the town for protection, as they see themselves liable to be murdered and plundered, and no steps taken to disperse the Chuārs; and it is distressing to see them bereft of the means of getting a subsistence—also many hundreds

of the inhabitants of Midnapore, who procured a livelihood by cutting wood; this they are not at present able to do through the fear of being murdered. In short, all communication with the jungles is cut off." On the 16th March 1799 the Chuārs attacked Anandapur, where they killed two sepoys and many ryots, the rest of the guard escaping to Midnapore; and on the 2nd April, after having twice sacked the village, they burnt it down.

Midnapore itself was threatened several times. On the 17th March the Collector wrote to Colonel Dunn, commanding at Midnapore, stating that he had every reason to believe that the banditti would attack the town in the night, and requested him to permit the treasure in his charge to be lodged in the magazine. Again on the 21st he wrote:—"This town was to have been burnt the day before yesterday. All the inhabitants were so well informed of this their intention—for the Chuārs did not think it necessary to keep it a secret—that the greater part of the inhabitants left; but in consequence of my *dīwān* having given out that fifty European soldiers and two companies of sepoys had arrived, information was immediately sent to the Chuārs, and, from what I have heard through my *dīwān*, I am in hopes that the banditti will be deterred from burning the town. At the same time, the inhabitants are under the greatest apprehensions, and a great many take shelter every night in my grounds with their children and such little property as they have. It is dangerous to travel even in the open plains through fear of robbers, for every vagabond has turned a thief, as they see they can plunder with impunity." A similar account was given by him in a report to the Board a few days before:—"I am at a loss for words to paint the situation of the district, particularly pergunnah Midnapore. I cannot remain an idle spectator of the innumerable outrages which are daily committed with impunity."

At length, the authorities were moved to action. Ausgarh and Karnagarh were taken, and the Rānī, who was suspected to be in league with the Chuārs, was brought to Midnapore as a prisoner on 6th April 1799. Five additional companies of sepoys were ordered to the district on 20th May, and this force was divided into different detachments and posted to the principal villages and centres of disturbances; altogether, 309 *subahdārs*, *jemadārs*, *havildārs*, *nāiks* and sepoys were stationed at Anandapur, Satpati, Karnagarh, Sālbani, Gopīballabhpur and Balarāmpur. The Chuārs and their confederates were now driven from one *pargana* to the other, and the ryots were

gradually induced to return to their homes and resume the cultivation of their lands.

By the middle of June 1799, the authorities began to get the upper hand, though for some time longer the Chuārs continued to commit sporadic depredations. They murdered six persons at Shiromani on 13th September; on the 26th two men were put to death near Anandapur; on the 9th October a party of Chuārs attacked a village 10 miles from Midnapore; and on 5th and 30th December 1799 they plundered several villages near the town. Gradually, however, the banditti were hunted down, and peace was restored. The state of the country in the meantime may be gathered from Mr. Price's remarks in *The Chuār Rebellion of 1799*:—"1799 A.D. is marked in the Midnapore annals as the year of the great Chuār rebellion, ghastly with its tale of horrors and massacre; when all the evil passions of the infuriated *sardārs* and *pāiks* burst forth in a wild attempt to revenge the resumption of their *jāgīr* lands on the Government, if not to compel it to order a complete restoration of them. All the lawless tribes of the Jungle Mahāls made common cause with the *pāiks* and carried slaughter and flame to the very doors of the Magistrate's cutcherry. The ordinary police and the military stationed at Midnapore were utterly unable to cope with the banditti, as they were called, and a reinforcement of troops had to be despatched to Midnapore. After a period of the greatest anxiety and suspense, after innumerable and most brutal murders, after the death of the Judge-Magistrate himself (previously Collector), who could bear the weight of his charge no longer, and succumbed under the accumulation of his troubles: it was not till the close of the year that the district was restored to a state of only partial tranquillity."

It was suspected that the disturbances were fomented by the servants of the dispossessed Midnapore Rānī and others, but the main cause of the outbreak appears to have been the issue of orders for the resumption of *pāik jāgīr* lands in the zamīndāri of the Rānī. The aggrieved *pāiks* consequently gave little aid to the authorities, while the bolder spirits joined the bands of Chuārs. In this connection the Collector reported to the Board on 25th May 1799:—"The resumption of the *paikān* lands had taken place in the years 1201 and 1204 (F. style); but a great part of the lands in question had been left uncultivated, and had suffered so rapid a decline that, excepting in the first year of the first and principal resumption, not only no part of the additional assessment laid upon the land had been realized, but every year there had arisen a considerable balance in the original *peshkash*

jamā, which had always been collected with great regularity. It was hardly a matter for surprise or indignation that, when the ancient occupants of the land, without having been charged with any crime or misconduct, saw their supposed rights, founded upon long possession of them, deliberately invaded in order to provide funds for the charges of the police, and at last found themselves either stripped of all their possessions or subjected to new demands of rent, which they were incapable of paying, they should have despaired of obtaining redress by a proper representation of their grievances, and have seized the first favourable opportunity that presented itself of taking up arms, and of attempting to recover by force what they thought had been taken from them with injustice, especially when it was considered that they were a rude and almost savage race of men, without any experience of the justice and humanity of the British Government, which did not appear to have been ever held out to them as the means to which they ought to look back with confidence for redress."

The Vice-President in Council in a letter, dated 15th March 1799, also censured the Board for the "injudicious system of conduct pursued in the management of the *paikān* lands," and expressed much surprise "that the circumstances of the rapid decline of the revenue, and the disorder and difficulties attending the collections, have attracted so little attention on your part." The Board then directed that the settlement of the *paikān* lands should be postponed until the disturbances had been suppressed; and as the police *dārogās* had failed to put a stop to them, the zamīndārs of the Jungle Mahāls were vested with police powers within their respective territories. The Board also directed that the regulations about arrears of revenue should not be enforced against defaulting estates situated in the jungle and exposed to the depredations of the Chuārs till tranquillity had been restored.*

For some years later the Chuārs continued to give trouble, and in 1806 harried the country as far east as the Bhogrāi *pargana*. Shortly after this, a vigorous campaign was instituted against them, which is described as follows in Hamilton's *Hindostan* (1820):—"Although within 60 miles of Calcutta, up to 1816, owing to peculiar local obstacles, the authority of Government had never been firmly established in this tract (Bāgri *pargana*), nor had the peaceably disposed inhabitants ever enjoyed that protection which had been so effectually extended to all parts of the old provinces. In Bāgri the leaders of the Chuārs continued to act as

* J. C. Price, *The Chuar Rebellion of 1799*.

if they had been independent of any Government, and endeavoured to maintain their predominance by the most atrocious acts of rapine and, frequently, the murder of individuals in revenge for having given evidence against them. Besides perpetrating rapine and murder in the prosecution of their ordinary vocation, these Chuārs were generally extremely ready to become the instruments of private malice among the inhabitants, when the malignity of their hatred stimulated them to assassination, which they were too cowardly to perform with their own hands.

"Every attempt to establish an efficient police having failed, it became necessary to concentrate the powers usually vested in different local authorities in one functionary, under the immediate direction of the Governor-General, which was accordingly done, and Mr. Oakley deputed to execute the arduous commission. The first measure adopted by this gentleman was to ascertain the principal ringleaders of the banditti, in order that they might be specifically excluded from the general amnesty to be offered to the great majority of the Chuārs. The next was to deprive them of their accustomed supplies of food, to encourage a spirit of active co-operation among the inhabitants, and generally to diminish the terror which the cruelty of the Chuārs had impressed on the neighbouring villagers and cultivators. The success of these measures was becoming daily more conspicuous, when it was unfortunately arrested by the insurrection of the *pāiks* in the adjacent *pargana* of Bhānjabhūm. The effect of this commotion, however, was only temporary, for by the middle of 1816 the gangs of plunderers had been dispersed, and crimes of enormity nearly suppressed, while the current revenue due to Government was completely realized. In February 1816, the Chuār banditti consisted of 19 leaders and about 200 accomplices. In the course of a few months all the chiefs, except two, were apprehended, or fell in resisting the attempts to apprehend them ; their frequent and pertinacious resistance being partly ascribable to their long habits of ferocity, and partly to their expectation of capital punishment if taken alive."*

British trade.

When the British took possession of the district in pursuance of their treaty with Nawāb Mīr Kāsim Alī, they established a factory for piece-goods at Midnapore town, which was under the control of the Resident. There was also a weaving factory at Khīrpai in Ghātāl, but this was not under the Resident, being attached first to the Burdwān district, and subsequently to Hooghly on the formation of that district. Even without this charge, the commercial business of the Company formed no small part of the

* W. Hamilton, *Description of Hindostan*, 1820, Vol. I, pp. 152-53.

Resident's work, and the early records of the district are full of correspondence on the subject. The following system was in vogue. The Resident entered into contracts with merchants for the supply of raw silk and of cotton and silk piece-goods. The merchants received advances (*dādni*), gave security, were bound to make good their contract within a specified time, and were prohibited from supplying similar goods to any other person. They, in their turn, contracted with the weavers and silk-rearers, and had to give them advances. The cloths were produced on the due date at the factory, where, after examination, they were packed in bales. The bales were then despatched to Calcutta with the Government treasure, *i.e.*, the surplus of land revenue collections, under a guard. The bales contained usually not less than 100 and often as many as 120 pieces. Raw silk was sent chiefly from Rādhānagar (subsequently Ghātāl). In 1768 we find that the Resident, in order to develop the silk trade, offered lands at low rents for mulberry cultivation, and tried to induce silk-winders from Kāsijora, Kutubpur and Nārājol to settle near Midnapore. Next year he renewed his offer, and a number of weavers deserted Khīrpāi for Midnapore. In 1770 the Directors sent out an expert from Europe, named Grimaud, to improve the quality and colour of the piece-goods, and in 1777 an European official was stationed at Midnapore as Commercial Resident.

French trade. At this time, the French were the only other European nation who had any trade in the district. They had two small factories, one at Khirpāi (Ghātāl), and the other at Mohanpur near Jaleswar, both under the Director and Council of Chandernagore. The chief articles produced were white cloths at Mohanpur, and cotton and silk cloths at Khīrpāi. Each *aurung* or factory was under a French Resident, who made advances to *dalāls* (brokers). The latter often owed considerable sums, which the French found considerable difficulty in recovering, their efforts to do so leading to complaints lodged before the British authorities. On one occasion, at least, the relations between the French and the English were distinctly strained, owing to political rather than commercial difficulties. This was in 1770, when the approach of a French force was apprehended. It was ascertained that a large quantity of rice was being stored for French agents at Khejrī (Kedgeree) where it was guarded by several peons. The Resident sent one detachment there, and another to Contai, which subsequently marched to Amirābād, 4 miles nearer the river, to watch the movements of the French. The two companies were, however, withdrawn by the end of July 1770, when the rains had set

in, and it was found that the French had taken no further action.

The archæological remains still existing in Midnapore are interesting, as they reflect the characteristics of the various races that have ruled or occupied the land. To begin with, the numerous small pillars lying on the plain of Kiārchand in thāna Gopīballabhpur appear to be memorial stones set up by the jungle tribes; some of them may be even prehistoric. Next, the Oriyā influence is distinctly traceable in the majority of the old temples, as might be expected from the fact that they held the district for several centuries. The Orissan tower form is adopted in the temples of Sarvvamangalā and Kanseswar at Garhbetā in the extreme north, in the Sahasralinga temple at Chandrarekhāgarh in the south-west, in the temple of Syāmaleswar at Dāntan, and in several smaller temples of Siva found in different parts of the district. The body of the temple of Bargabhīma at Tamlūk is also not unlike an Orissan tower. The Bengali style of architecture was introduced chiefly from Bishnupur, and is of later date. The finely carved Pancharatna temple at Goāltor in Bāgri, the Lālji temple at Chandrakonā, the laterite temple of the Nārājol Rāj in the suburbs of Midnapore town, and various other smaller temples betray the influence of the Bishnupur variety of the Bengali style.*

ARCHÆOLOGY.

The remains of many old forts are extant, for, in the troubled times before British rule was established, the most influential zamīndārs in the plains had forts to which they could retire in case of invasion or in order to resist the demands of the authorities for land revenue. In the Jungle Mahāls also every petty chief had his fort (*garh*) enclosed by walls of laterite and surrounded by a ring-fence of thorny, almost impenetrable jungle. In the plains the place of the latter was taken by dense bamboo clumps, which also formed a good defence, as may be gathered from the following description of *kila* Maināchaurā. "It is surrounded by two ditches—one wet and one dry—both formerly very deep and broad, and filled with alligators. Within its inner ditch was another defence of closely-planted bamboos, so intertwisted with each other as to be impervious to an arrow, and unapproachable by cavalry, which formed the main force of the Marāthā invaders. The ground thus enclosed is wide, and contains many houses." Another memorial of these times is found in the shape of large tanks excavated by local Governors or zamīndārs, more particularly in the west of the district. In the Bāgri *pargana* several of these old tanks still supply the villagers with drinking

* M. M. Chakravarti, *Bengali Temples*, J. A. S. B., 1909.

water, and near Dāntan there are two fine tanks which were excavated during the period of Oriyā rule.

There are very few archæological remains dating back to the time of Muhammadan supremacy, though it is comparatively recent. Such as there are mostly lie along the old Pādshāhi Road, such as some mosques in Midnapore town and some tombs, none of which, however, are of any importance. An old mosque at Gaganeswar near the Kesiāri outpost appears originally to have been a Hindu temple built in the time of Kapileswara Deva (1434-69 A.D.).*

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* M. M. Chakravarti, *The Last Hindu Kings of Orissa*, J. A. S. B., 1900, pp. 180-82.

ADDENDUM.

According to the provisional totals of the census of 1911, the population of the district is 2,820,374, the increase since 1901 representing 1·1 per cent. as compared with 6 per cent. in the decade ending in 1901.

CHAPTER III.

THE PEOPLE.

GROWTH OF POPULATION.

IN 1872, when the first census of Bengal was taken, the population of the district as now constituted was 2,542,920, but it fell to 2,515,565 in 1881 owing to the virulent epidemic of fever known as Burdwān fever, which, it is estimated, caused a mortality of 250,000 during the years in which it raged in Midnapore. Since 1881 there has been a steady growth of population, the number rising to 2,631,466 in 1891 and to 2,789,114 in 1901. This increase is the result of a rapid growth of the population along the sea-coast and the estuary of the Hooghly and a fair natural development in the healthy, but barren and sparsely inhabited, uplands in the west of the district, combined however with stagnation or decline in the ill-drained depression that intervenes between these two extremes. The following account of the census of 1901 is quoted from the Bengal Census Report:—

CENSUS OF 1901.

"Since 1881 the health of the district has been fair and the population on the whole has made satisfactory progress. Although much ordinary fever exists in the badly drained and flooded tracts, in other respects the health of the people shows a marked improvement, and during the last decade the district has been peculiarly free from cholera and small-pox epidemics. This is due in recent years to the opening of the railway through the district, which carries the crowds of pilgrims to Jagannāth, who previously plodded wearily on foot and spread disease in all directions along their line of march. The railway has benefited the district in many other respects. By facilitating the disposal of produce, prices have risen, and the cultivators, who enjoy fixity of tenure, are very well off. It has opened up several of the jungle thānas and stimulated trade. The decade has been a prosperous one, and in 1897, when the pinch of famine was keenly felt elsewhere, the birth-rate was unusually high—a circumstance attributed by the Magistrate to the prosperity of the people, who disposed of their hoards of rice at famine prices.

" In the district as a whole there has been an advance of about 6 per cent. in the population since 1891, as compared with a gain

of 4·6 per cent. in the previous decade, and a decrease of 1 per cent. in 1872-81. The Contai subdivision leads the way with an increase of 11 per cent. All the thānas in this subdivision have gained considerably, but especially Contai itself, which has added nearly a sixth to its population of 1891, and the other three thānas on the coast, which contain the great temporarily-settled estate of Majnamutha. The Ghātāl subdivision has lost nearly 1 per cent. of the population recorded at the last census. This decrease, as well as one of 1·3 per cent. in thāna Debra and insignificant increases of ·6 and ·8 per cent., respectively, in thānas Sābang and Nārāyangarh, all in the Sadar subdivision, is largely due to the movement of a portion of the population from the densely populated and low-lying tracts in the north-east and centre of the district to the reclaimed *jalpai* lands along the coast and tidal rivers in the Contai and Tamlūk subdivisions. From the times of the Muhammadans these lands had been reserved by Government for the accumulation of salt and for the supply of fuel to boil the brine. The manufacture of salt by Government was stopped about forty years ago, and the lands, which are very extensive, were settled with various persons. After some time they began to be cleared and to be surrounded with embankments to keep out the salt water. Thus protected, they yield abundant crops and are still an attraction to cultivators from distant parts of the district. Unfortunately, the embanking of these lands is said to have caused deterioration in the beds of various tidal rivers and *khāls*, and so to have rendered more frequent the flooding of the low-lying tracts inland which have been previously referred to."

The following table gives the salient results of the census of 1901 :—

SUBDIVISION	Area in square miles.	Number of Towns.	Number of Villages.	Population.	Population per square mile.	Percentage of variation in population between 1891 and 1901.
Midnapore ...	3,271	1	3,782	1,277,749	391	+4·5
Ghātāl ...	372	5	1,042	324,991	874	−0·9
Tamlūk ...	653	1	1,578	583,238	893	+9·0
Contai ...	849	...	2,062	603,136	710	+10·6
District Total	5,186*	7	8,464	2,789,114	538	+6·0

* Includes 41 square miles returned as uninhabited river beds.

Density of population.

The distribution of population depends more on the nature of the soil than on any other cause. The eastern half of the district, which is alluvial, is thickly populated, while the west of the district, where there is a laterite soil covered here and there with jungle, is sparsely inhabited, mostly by aboriginal tribes. The pressure of the population is greatest along the bank of the Rūpnārāyan and the estuary of the Hooghly, the maximum density being found in Tamlūk thāna, where there are 1,156 persons to the square mile. The town after which this thāna is named was once a famous sea-port, and though the sea has long since left it, it is still a place of considerable importance as the centre of the boat traffic on the Rūpnārāyan. Further inland the soil is still fertile, but the climate is bad, and the population gradually decreases. In the western half of the district the cultivable area is small, and the population steadily diminishes, until in the extreme west, on the confines of Singhbhūm and Mayūrbhanj, it is less than a quarter as dense as it is in Tamlūk, being only 259 per square mile.

As regards the density of population in the different subdivisions, it will be apparent from the table given above that the population is unequally distributed among them. The causes of this uneven distribution are permanent. Ghātāl and Tamlūk lie on the east of the district and consist of fertile rice-growing alluvial plains, while the Hooghly, Rūpnārāyan and Haldi supply easy water carriage for the export of grain and the carrying on of the trade. Contai, to the west of Tamlūk, lies on the sea-coast, and there are large tracts of sandy or salt-impregnated soil. Conditions in the Sadar subdivision are very different. Two-thirds of it lie on the laterite plateau running down from Binpur and Mānbhūm, and this barren soil cannot maintain a large agricultural population, for large tracts are covered by *sāl* forest and jungle, on which little impression has been made.

Migration.

The volume of emigration and immigration is comparatively small, for, according to the census of 1901, the immigrants number less than 50,000 and the emigrants 134,000, representing 1·8 and 4·8 per cent. respectively of the population. The number of immigrants is particularly small: indeed, Midnapore receives a smaller number of immigrants in proportion to its population than any district in West Bengal. If contiguous districts are excluded, the foreign-born population comes mainly from the United and Central Provinces, Cuttack and Shāhābād. There is a considerable permanent migration from the west of the district to Mayūrbhanj and to the Assam tea

gardens, and a fair amount of periodic emigration from the Contai, Tamlūk and Ghātāl subdivisions, the emigrants seeking employment as cultivators and field labourers in the Sundarbans and as mill hands and coolies in the metropolitan districts. It would appear from the proportion of women amongst them that many of the emigrants to the Sundarbans are beginning to settle down there permanently. The figures already given show that, on the whole, there is a small loss by migration, owing to the railway having facilitated the exodus of labourers and others in search of temporary employment.

Occupations. Agriculture supports 77·2 per cent. of the population, industries 9·8 per cent., the professions 2·9 per cent., and commerce 0·5 per cent. The population is more distinctively agricultural than in any other part of West or Central Bengal. A third of the agricultural population are actual workers, and these include 602,000 rent-payers and 10,000 rent-receivers, while herdsmen number 14,000 and field labourers 98,000. Of the industrial population 47 per cent. are actual workers, and of these rice pounders (19,000, mostly women), fishermen and fish dealers (19,000), servants, including barbers and washermen (24,000), cotton weavers (17,000) and mat and basket makers (15,000) are most numerous. A large number of women are employed in industrial occupations, especially in mat making and as servants. Among the professional classes, priests number 8,000 and religious mendicants 9,000, while 3,000 are employed in teaching. The number of general labourers (79,000) is large and there are no less than 12,000 beggars.

Towns and villages. There are seven towns in the district, but none are of any great size. The largest is Midnapore with 33,140 inhabitants, but it has no important industry or trade and it shows no tendency to grow. Tamlūk, the headquarters of the boat traffic on the Rūpnārāyan, added 22 per cent. to its population in the decad ending in 1901, but it still has barely 8,000 inhabitants. The other five towns, viz., Ghātāl, Chandrakonā, Kharār, Rāmjibanpur and Khirpai, are situated in the north-east of the district, which suffered from the Burdwān fever epidemic, and they have scarcely yet regained the population they then lost. Altogether 3 per cent. of the population is contained in these seven towns, and the remainder congregate in 8,464 villages, 3 per cent. of the rural population living in villages with 2,000 to 5,000 inhabitants, 40 per cent. in villages with 500 to 2,000 inhabitants, and 57 per cent. in villages containing under 500 persons.

Languages. The population is a polyglot one, 80 out of every 100 persons speaking Bengali, 10 Oriyā, 3 Hindī, and the remainder other

languages, among which Santāli predominates. Speaking generally, the prevailing language is Bengali, but Oriyā is spoken towards the south and Santāli towards the west and north-west of the district.

Bengali. In the east and north of the district the dialect in common use closely resembles the Standard Bengali spoken in the neighbouring district of Howrah; while in the north, near Garhbeta, the dialect is somewhat like the Western Bengali of Bānkurā. In central Midnapore the dialect is the variety classified by Dr. Grierson as South-Western Bengali, which shades off into Oriyā and has as great a title to be called a dialect of that language as of Bengali. It might almost be classed as a mixed sub-dialect of Standard Bengali and Oriyā, but it differs from both languages and possesses peculiarities of its own which entitle it to be classed as an independent dialect.*

Oriyā A corrupt form of Oriyā is spoken in the south of the district, viz., in the Contai subdivision, in the southern half of thāna Nārāyangarh and in thāna Dāntan. It is also spoken in the west of the district by the Aryan population of thānas Gopīballabhpur, Jhārgāon and Binpur. The Oriyā of the south of the district is infected by Bengali peculiarities, and that of the west by the language of the non-Aryan inhabitants who have introduced a certain number of Santāli words into the vocabulary. Regarding the character of this form of Oriyā, Dr. Grierson writes:—"The Oriyā of North Balasore shows signs of being Bengalised, and, as we cross the boundary between that district and Midnapore, we find at length almost a new dialect. It is not, however, a true dialect. It is a mechanical mixture of corrupt Bengali and of corrupt Oriyā. A man will begin a sentence in Oriyā, drop into Bengali in its middle, and go back to Oriyā at its end. The vocabulary freely borrows from Bengali, and in North-West Midnapore even from the Santāli which is spoken by the aborigines, who there live among their Oriyā-speaking neighbours. All this time, however, the language is Oriyā in its essence. It has put on strange clothes like Peter in the 'Tale of a Tub', but the heart that beats under the strangely embroidered waistcoat is the same. Nevertheless a person speaking this Midnapore Oriyā is often unintelligible to a man from Purī and *vice versâ*. According to Babu Monmohan Chakravarti, this mutual unintelligibility is due not so much to actual change in the language as to differences of pronunciation. In Bengali the accent is thrown back as far as possible, but to assist this, the succeeding syllables

* Linguistic Survey of India, Vol. V, Part I, pp. 59-60, and 105-109.

are contracted or slurred over in pronunciation. The same method of pronunciation is affected by the speakers of Midnapore Oriyā. In true Oriyā, on the other hand, every syllable is distinctly pronounced, and the accent is put on the penultimate syllable if it is a long one, and never further back than the antepenultimate. In Midnapore, too, the written characters are changed. Sometimes the Oriyā character is frankly abandoned, and the language is written in the Bengali character. At other times, when the Oriyā character is used, it is changed by an angular shape being given to the curved tops which are so indicative of Oriyā writing".

To go into some detail, the language of the Contai subdivision of the Midnapore district is certainly Oriyā, but it is strongly infected by the Bengali spoken to the north across the river Haldi. It is not that a new dialect is formed partaking of some of the characteristics of each and intermediate between each language. On the contrary, the language of the subdivision is a curious mixture of fairly pure Bengali and fairly pure Oriyā, the speakers using words of each language apparently at haphazard and mixing them up in a kind of bilingual sentence. The basis of the language is Oriyā, *i.e.*, the majority of words and grammatical forms belong to it, while the rest are Bengali. In thāna Dāntan and in the south of thāna Nārāyangarh the language is not so much affected by Bengali as in Contai, but it is sufficiently distinct from that of Orissa proper to prevent the respective speakers of these dialects being always mutually intelligible, and a similar want of mutual legibility exists between the written characters of the two tracts.*

Owing to the close connection between the Bengali and Oriyā spoken in the south of the district, the enumerations of persons speaking these languages give very different results. In 1891, for instance, the number of persons speaking Oriyā was returned at 572,796, and in 1901 as 270,495. In the Dāntan thāna of Midnapore Oriyā is now returned as the language of 91,480 out of 123,541 persons; in Gopīballabhpur of 96,287 out of 163,156, in Egra of 57,292 out of 77,884, and in Rāmnagar of 10,741 out of 75,020. The remaining Oriyā speakers are found chiefly in thānas Nārāyangarh, Contai, Jhārgāon and Midnapore.

Santāli. Santāli, which is a tribal and not a local language, is spoken by the Santāls of the west of the district in thānas Dāntan Gopīballabhpur, Jhārgāon and Binpur. The total number of persons speaking it was returned at 146,018—a figure exceeded

* Linguistic Survey of India, Vol. V, Part 2, pp. 369-70, 420, 422.

only in two other districts of Bengal, viz., the Santāl Parganas (648,847) and Mānbhūm (131,687).

Hindus at the census of 1901 numbered 2,467,047 or 88 per cent. of the population, Muhammadans 184,958 or 7 per cent., and Animists 135,050 or 5 per cent., while there were 1,974 Christians and 85 members of other religions. During the last decade the Hindus and Muhammadans have increased slightly at the expense of the Animists, who are found only among the aboriginals in the north and west of the district. RELIGIONS.

The number of Christians has been steadily rising in the last 20 years, being 740 in 1881, and 1,545 in 1891, while in 1901 it was 1,974, of whom 1,545 were natives. The increase in the last decade is to some extent due to the formation of a railway settlement at Kharagpur. Outside the Kharagpur thāna, the Christian community is chiefly found in thānas Midnapore and Sālbani, where an American Baptist Mission works, and in thāna Jhārgāon, where there is a Jesuit Mission. After these thānas most are found in thāna Maslandpur (Mahishādāl), where there is a curious colony of Christians near Geonākhāli. They say that they are descendants of some Portuguese artillerymen, whom the Rājā of Mahishādāl imported to protect his estates from the Marāthā raids. Except that they are Christians and that some have Portuguese names, they cannot be distinguished from their neighbours: indeed, in the same family one man may have a Portuguese name, such as Pedro, and another a Hindu name, such as Gopāl. Christians.

The most important mission is the American Free Baptist Mission, which was established at Midnapore in the year 1863, a branch being opened next year at Binpur about 20 miles from this station. At Midnapore the mission works among Bengalis, and at Binpur among Santāls. The mission also carries on evangelistic work in 8 outstations, including Chandrakonā and Contai. A Church of England Mission is established at Midnapore and Kharagpur. It began work in 1836 at Midnapore, where St. John's Church was built in 1851; and in 1860 a Trust was formed to guarantee the continuance of mission work connected with the Church of England. It maintains mission schools at Midnapore and Kharagpur. There is also a small Roman Catholic Mission engaged in missionary work among the Santāls. A chaplain of the Church of England ministers at Midnapore and Kharagpur, as well as at Cuttack, Purī, Khurdā Road and Balasore.

Of the total number (184,958) of Muhammadans, no less than 121,044 were returned as Sheikhs in 1901, while Pathāns numbered 22,059, Jolāhās 12,919, Tutiās 8,057 and Saiyads 7,253. From a report submitted during the census of Muhammadans.

1901, it appears that proselytization is fairly active among this community. "There is," it is stated, "not a village inhabited by Muhammadans which is not periodically visited by preachers and *maulvis*. The visitors do not levy any fee or subscription, but are voluntarily invited to preach from village to village, where they are not only fed very sumptuously, but also offered cash presents in addition. The Hindus generally attend such assemblies and listen to the preachers. The doctrines of Islām are simple enough for everybody to understand, and some of the Hindus renounce Hinduism and embrace Islām. The above cause has been at work from a long time. It never attracted public notice owing to the instances of conversion at any particular place being few and far between, but on the whole it has been the chief cause of the gradual increase of the Muhammadan population."*

CASTES AND TRIBES.

Midnapore being a district intermediate between Bengal and Orissa, the population possesses characteristics common to the people of both Provinces, which are described as follows by Mr. H. V. Bayley in his Memoranda of Midnapore (1852):—"The people of Midnapore proper are generally composed of an amalgamated race, who can neither be called Bengalis nor Oriyās, but who are a mixture of both. It is not intended to convey by this remark the impression that the mixture observable has been effected so much by intermarriage between the two classes as by the adoption of manners and habits common to both. The people of Midnapore proper are of Bengal *and* Orissa. Its inhabitants consist of emigrants from both parts, who have by long association with each other lost the salient points of their respective nationalities. But the Bengali emigrants appear evidently to form only a small proportion of the people, from the great prevalence of Oriyā family names among all classes of society, as Behārā, Giri, Janā, Mahāpātra, Mahikup, Mahānti, Pāndā, Patnaik, etc. The common use also of Khās-Khail and Sāwant as family names points to another class, viz., Marāthās. The term Khās-Khail was applied to soldiers of the Rājā's body-guard in the time of Marāthā independence, and Sāwant was the family name of a numerous and distinguished class of Marāthās. One thing, however, is apparent, viz., that the wealthy landed classes and other gentry of the country are insensibly approximating to the manners of the same class in Bengal." This account still holds good in respect of a certain proportion of the population, but it would be more correct to say that the inhabitants of Midnapore are

* Bengal Census Report of 1901, Part I, Appendix II, p. X.

composed of three classes, viz., pure Bengalis, Bengali-Oriyās, and aboriginal tribes. The Kaibarttas, the great race caste of Midnapore, account for nearly a third of the whole population; the Bāgdis, an aboriginal caste, are strongly represented; while the Santāls are more numerous than in any district in Bengal except the Santāl Parganas and Mānbhūm.

Kaibartta ...	883,494	Bhumij ...	44,233
Santāl	148,251	Kāyasth ...	41,486
Bāgdi ...	142,212	Nāpit ...	40,942
Sadgop ...	130,851	Kadmā ...	39,895
Brāhman ...	114,110	Dhobā ...	37,522
Vaishnava (Bairāgi) ...	92,968	Namasūdra (Chandāl) ...	36,857
Tānti	87,708	Kāmār and Lohār	36,515
Kurmi	75,267	Pod	28,547
Teli	70,286	Sukli	28,490
Rāju	59,000	Kumhār ...	27,932
Goālā	50,116	Kāstha	27,625
Karan	49,389	Hāri	27,332

The marginal table shows the different tribes and castes with a strength of over 25,000. Space forbids notice of any but the first five, to which will be added an account of certain castes more or less peculiar to Midnapore.

Kaibarttas.

Local tradition states that the Kaibarttas were originally settled on the banks of the river Sarju or Gogrī in Oudh, and that they came to Midnapore, led by five chiefs, and conquered it. Sridha Hui, the then Rājā of Mayna, is said to have been defeated by Gobardhan Nanda, who took his kingdom and founded a family. This defeat of the Rājā of Mayna is the subject of a local poem once very popular, but now seldom read. The five chiefs, according to tradition, established as many principalities, viz., Tāmralipta (Tamlūk), Balisita, Turka, Sujamutha and Kutabpur. The Sujamutha family is now extinct, the last lineal descendant of the Rājā dying some 20 years ago. The Tamlūk and Kutabpur families still survive, but have been reduced to indigence, while the Turka family is represented by the Mahāpātras of Khunduri. From this tradition it may perhaps be inferred that Midnapore is one of the earliest seats of the tribe and that they once held a commanding position in it. Dr. Grierson conjectures that they entered Midnapore from Orissa and writes:—"The history of their arrival in the district accounts for the very peculiar character of the dialect of Bengali spoken by them. Originally owning some non-Aryan language, they arrived in Midnapore speaking a corrupt patois of Oriyā, and on this, as a basis, they have built the dialect of Bengali which they speak in their present home."*

The Kaibarttas have been traced to a very early period, being mentioned as Kevarttas in the *Vājasaneyi Samhitā*, as Kaivarttas in the Epics and the *Manu-Samhitā*, and as Kevatas in a pillar-edict of Asoka. Not improbably they held the old kingdom of

* Linguistic Survey of India, Vol. V, Part I, p. 106.

Tāmralipti. They seem to have consisted originally of a congeries of tribes, which coalesced owing to the similarity of their functions. As land was gradually reclaimed from the waste and came under settled cultivation, they took more and more to agriculture. The cultivating portion then gradually drew away from the rest and set up as a higher caste with degraded Brāhmans for priests. Their power, wealth and number eventually secured for them a higher social status and an acknowledgment that water might be taken from them (*jalācharaniya*) by Brāhmans and other higher castes.

The Kaibarttas of Midnapore are subdivided into two sub-castes, the Uttar Rārhi and the Dakshin Rārhi, the latter being again subdivided into four septs, called Lālchatai, Ekside, Doside and Mākunda, which are of an uncommon type. The Lālchatai, the highest of the series, appears to be of hypergamous origin. It is explained that they used to have a 'red mat' to sit on, as a mark of social distinction at the meetings of the Kaibartta caste. The next two names are based on a marriage custom. The Ekside, when they go with a wedding procession to fetch the bride, will not eat in her father's house on the wedding night. He therefore sends them a present (*side*) of food, which they cook and eat in a neighbour's house. The Doside extend this to the night after the wedding and therefore are described as 'two-present men.' Mākunda is said to be an eponymous group. They carry their own wedding presents to the bride's house, and they eat cooked food with any Kaibartta, whether he belongs to their class or not.*

Socially, the Kaibarttas are frugal and industrious, ranking among the best cultivators of the district. A large proportion of the zamīndārs and *tālukdārs*, and most of the ryots, belong to this caste, which represents all interests in land ranging from the proprietor to the cultivator. By religion the great majority are Vaishnavas; and it is said that they pay greater respect to a Vaishnava than to a Brāhman.

Nearly all are cultivating Kaibarttas or Mahisyas, and only a small minority are fishing Kaibarttas or Jeliyās, who occupy a very low position in the social scale. The name Mahisya is a new one adopted since the census of 1901, when the Chāsi Kaibarttas urged that they were entirely distinct from the Jeliyā Kaibarttas, and that their proper appellation was Mahisya, an ancient caste of much respectability, which is said to be descended from a Kshattriya father and a Vaisya mother.

* *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, Vol. I, p. 379.

The Santāls are found in the undulating laterite country in the north and west, where there is ample room for their expansion. A hardy and prolific race, they are multiplying faster than other more civilized races and are settling down as peaceful cultivators and labourers. The date of their settlement in this district is unknown, but their traditions relate that they came to Saont, the modern Silda *pargana*, in the course of their wanderings several centuries ago. Their name is held by some authorities to be derived from this tract of country, Santāl being an English form of Saontār or Saontāl. Among themselves they call the tract Santbhui. **Santāls.**

The earliest account of the Santāls in Midnapore appears to be contained in Walter Hamilton's *Description of Hindostan* (1820), where they are described as follows :—"Some parts of these jungles are occupied by a poor miserable proscribed race of men called Sontals, despised on account of their low caste by the inhabitants of the plain country, who would on no account allow any one of them to fix himself in their villages. The peasantry in the vicinity, by way of distinction, call themselves good creditable people, while they scarcely admit the Sontals within the pale of humanity; yet the latter are a mild, sober, industrious people, and remarkable for sincerity and good faith. The zamīndārs give them no leases, yet on the whole treat them well; for such is their timidity, that they fly on the least oppression, and are no more heard of. Notwithstanding they hold their lands on such easy terms, and scarcely ever have their verbal tenures violated, they are said to be naked, half-starved, and apparently in the lowest stage of human misery ; a result we should not have expected from the character above assigned them. Their villages are generally situated between the cultivated plains and the thick jungles, in order that they may protect the crops of their more fortunate neighbours from deer and wild swine. In some instances they have been known to till their lands with considerable success, and raise good crops of rice and collie (*kalai*), but all that their vigilance can preserve from the ravages of wild beasts, is extorted from them by the rapacity of the money-lenders. To these miscreants, the Sontals, who have but a slender knowledge of the value of money, pay interest at the rate of 100 per cent. for their food, and nearly 150 per cent. for their seed ; so that when their crops are ready, little or nothing remains for themselves."

As regards their present distribution there are small scattered Santāl villages towards the west, in the hilly north-western

corner of Binpur, with a few larger villages near Silda. These give place further east to *Dikku* (non-Santāl) villages containing large stretches of cultivation, as in the neighbourhood of Binpur; but the east of the Kāsai river, where the land belongs to the Rāmgarh and Lālgarh Rājās, is probably one of the most densely populated Santāl areas in the district. Further east, in Garhbeta, the villages lie mostly on the western and southern sides of the thāna; there are a few scattered villages in the north. South of this, the Santāl villages in Sālbani lie to the west, verging on the Santāl villages in Jhārgrām, where there are large patches of jungle, reserved by the proprietor for his own use. As the river Subarnarekhā is approached, the country becomes less jungly and more fertile. South of the Subarnarekhā, where the land rises towards the hills of Mayūrbhanj and is mostly under jungle, with open spaces here and there, the proportion of Santāl villages considerably increases.

Bāgdis. The Bāgdis are a caste of aboriginal descent ranking very low in the Hindu hierarchy of castes. They are held to be impure, the Tentuli section alone being held to be a little higher and thus able to give Ganges water. Originally fishermen, they have now mostly become agricultural labourers and *pālki*-bearers. They seem to have consisted originally of several tribes, as the period of mourning varies among them, in some cases lasting thirty-one days as among other Sūdras, in others thirteen days and even eleven days as among Brāhmans. The name is connected with the tract called Bāgri in the north-west of the district; but it is uncertain whether this name was given to that part of the country in consequence of its having been inhabited by Bāgdis or whether the latter took their name from the country.

Sadgops. The Sadgops are another caste believed to be among the earliest inhabitants of the district. Tradition relates that the first Sadgop family which migrated to this district settled at Nārāyangarh, and it is said that the last Rājā of that place, who died some twenty years ago after having run through a splendid patrimony, was the twenty-third or twenty-fourth descendant, in the direct line, from the founder of the family. The Sadgops claim to be Vaisyas, but they are commonly regarded as a purified sub-caste of Goālās, who have obtained a higher position than the Goālās themselves by adopting agriculture as their occupation. They belong to the Nabasākha group, and Brāhmans will take water and certain kinds of sweetmeats from their hands. They are mostly cultivators, but some have risen to be zamīndārs of high position, *e.g.*, the family of the Rājā of Nārājol, which is the leading zamīndāri family of Midnapore.

There is one peculiar class of Brāhmans in Midnapore called Madhyasreni Brāhmans. They profess to derive their name from the fact of their original settlements in Midnapore lying in the Madhya-desa or the country midway between Bengal and Orissa. The following account of them is quoted from Sir H. H. Risley's *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*:—" They say that their ancestors were Rārhi Brāhmans, who settled early in Ballāl Sen's reign in *pargana* Mayna. When Ballāl Sena was engaged in classifying the Brāhmans of the rest of Bengal according to their degree of virtue, he sent a *ghatak* or genealogist to the Brāhmans settled in Mayna to include them in the scheme. They declined, however, to have anything to say to the institution of Kulinism, and there are no Kulins among them to this day. For their resistance to his orders, Ballāl Sena ordered them to be cut off from the rest of the caste, and all intercourse between them and the Brāhmans of Bengal proper was strictly forbidden. The Rārhi Brāhmans of the present day, with whom the Madhyasreni thus claim kinship, are by no means inclined to accept this legend as true. They point out that it is *primâ facie* most unlikely that a colony of Rārhi Brāhmans should have left their original seats for no particular reason, and have settled in an out-of-the-way place like *pargana* Mayna. Again, it is said, if the Madhyasren were really Rārhi Brāhmans, how it is that they have eight *gotras*, including Parasara, Gautama and Ghrita Kausika, while the true Rārhi have only five? Gautama and Ghrita Kausika are found among the Brāhmans of Orissa, and Parasara is said to be characteristic of the Saptasati Brāhmans of Bengal, whose ignorance of correct ritual compelled Adisura to import the ancestors of the Rārhi Brāhmans from Kanauj. Brāhmans.

" On these grounds it is conjectured that the Madhyasreni Brāhmans may be a composite group made up of members of the Rārhi, Utkal and Saptasati sub-castes, who for some reason broke off from their own classes, settled in an out-lying district, and in course of time formed a new sub-caste. Some go so far as to suggest that the original Madhyasreni were expelled from their own sub-castes, and quote a local tradition attaching to them the name *Madyadoshi*, guilty of drunkenness, in support of this view. Although a standard form of Kulinism is not recognized by the Madhyasreni, those families among them who bear the Rārhi Kulin names of Mukherji, Chatterji and Banerji are specially sought after in marriage, which practically comes to much the same thing. Another curious form of hypergamy is also in force among them. People who live in the four villages (Bhamua in *pargana* Mayna, Gokulnagar in Chetua, and Mahārājpur

and Bhogdanda in Kedar), supposed to be the original seats of the caste are held in great honour, and residents of other villages who marry their daughters to them are expected to pay a heavy bridegroom price.

"Most of the Madhyasreni are worshippers of the Saktis, but in the matter of religion and ceremonial observances generally they do not depart materially from the practices of other Brāhmans. It should be observed, however, that widows among them are allowed to eat uncooked food on the eleventh day of either fortnight of the moon, while the widows of other Brahmanical sub-castes are not allowed to touch even water on that day. Some Madhyasrenis again serve the Goālās or Gops as their family priests, and others are said to eat uncooked food at religious ceremonies performed by members of the Kaibartta caste, and to accept gifts from them on those occasions." A local report states:—"There is one peculiarity about these Brāhmans which clearly indicates that they have lost the sense of honour to which their brethren in other parts of the country are so keenly alive. Wherever a feast is given on the occasion of a marriage or *srāddha* by a rich man in the neighbourhood, they flock to it without a formal invitation. The Brāhmans in other parts of Bengal would rather starve than go to a feast without being formally invited thereto by the man who gives it, no matter how rich he may be."

Another peculiar class of Brāhmans consists of the Vyāsoktas, who serve the Kaibarttas as priests. Like the Kaibarttas themselves, these Kaibartta Brāhmans are divided into two sub-castes, Uttar Rārhi and Dakshin Rārhi. Members of the higher castes, who will take water from the hands of the Kaibarttas, will not take it from Kaibartta Brāhmans, and the Kaibarttas themselves will not eat food cooked by their own Brāhmans. The legends of their origin are as follows.

One legend states that they are descended from Barhu, a sage who composed heterodox Purānas and was cursed by Brahmā, who ordained that he and his descendants should be priests to men of the Sūdra caste. In consequence of this curse the Vyasoktas were told off to serve the Kaibarttas, the children of Bidur, on the banks of the Sarju river. Another story tells how the Kaibarttas rendered a great service to Ballāl Sen and were told to name their reward. They asked the king to compel the local Brāhmans to serve them as priests, but the Brāhman refused to obey, and the king in order to keep his promise vowed that the first man he saw in the morning should be made the Kaibarttas' priest. Next morning when the king

looked out, the first man he saw was his own sweeper, sweeping out the courtyard. This was not quite what the Kaibarttas meant, but the king's vow had to be kept, so the sweeper was invested with the sacred thread and sent to minister to the Kaibarttas. A third legend says that, after the Kaibarttas had settled in Midnapore, a certain Kaibartta merchant dug a big tank in *pargana* Kāsījora. To consecrate this tank, a Brāhman had to be got, who could kindle the sacred fire by the breath of his mouth. The Vyasoktas were unequal to this feat, but a Dravida Brāhman performed it. His caste brethren expelled him for having served a low caste, and he therefore settled in Midnapore.*

The majority of the respectable Brāhmans belong to the great Rārhi group, of which no special account is called for.

Bhakats. The Bhakats or Bhoktas of Midnapore are a small community of rather less than 3,000 persons. They profess to be descended from seven up-country mendicants who settled in the district twenty-five generations ago. This tradition, however, is at variance with the fact that they are divided into four exogamous septs of a purely totemistic pattern, viz., Shāndilya (from *sāl* fish), Chandrārishi (from Chandkurā), Bāmrishi (from the *bān* fish), and Kāshyapa (from *kachchhap*, a turtle). The persons of each sept show great reverence for the object after which it is called and abstain from killing or eating or naming it. It would thus appear that they are an offshoot from some Dravidian tribe, but it is not easy to trace any special affinities. They profess the Hindu religion, and are very strict in their observances. They are served by degraded Brāhmans, and their favourite object of worship is Rāma. Amongst the minor deities Manasā and Sitalā take the first place. Offerings of he-goats and sweetmeats are made to both of them by the males of the caste. Women and children take no part in the worship, and Brāhmans do not assist in the worship of Sitalā.†

Danda-mānjhis. The Dandamānjhis are a caste, also known as Danda Chhattra Mānjhi, found mainly in Midnapore. There are five exogamous subdivisions (called *gotras*), viz., Kāshyapa or Kāchhim (the tortoise), Sālmāchh (a fish), Depāik (a kind of bird), Chāndkurā-māchh (fish), and Pāt (a fibrous plant). These are totemistic, for the persons of each section or *gotra* show their respect for the animal or plant after which they are named by saluting it and by abstaining from killing, cutting, eating, or in any way making use of it. According to one account, there are three sub-castes,

* *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, Vol. I, pages 377-78.

† Bengal Census Report of 1901, Part I, pages 402-3.

viz., Dandamānjhi, Lohār Mānjhi and Kesaikulia Mānjhi; while, according to another, the only restriction on marriage is based on locality, persons living in certain *parganas* refusing to intermarry with persons living in certain other *parganas*. The caste traces its origin to a Mānjhi, who held the earthen pots (*danda*) containing the resin used for Siva's Charak Pūjā. By sect the Dandamānjhis are Sāktas. They employ degraded Brāhmans and burn their dead, and there is little to distinguish them from other Hindus. They believe their original occupation to have been fishing, a means of livelihood which is still largely followed; some are also cultivators and day labourers. Many of their women are employed as maidservants, even by high caste Hindus, but they are not allowed to touch water used for drinking or cooking purposes. They eat all sorts of fish and also the flesh of such animals as are lawful for Hindus. At the census of 1901 they were treated as a sub-caste of Bāgdis.*

Kadmās. At the census of 1901 the number of persons recorded as Kadmās in Bengal was 45,080, of whom 39,895 were resident in Midnapore. Members of this caste catch and sell fish, make and sell lime, carry bamboo frames on which torches are fixed in marriage processions, and perform rustic dances and gymnastic feats (*paikānnāch*) at weddings. Their titles are Bhuiyā, Dās, Dolai, Janā and Patra, and thay have five endogamous groups, viz., Kalandi Vaishnava, Mādalbājā, Sankhabājā, Machhūa and Chandāli. They belong to the Sāl Māchh *gotra* and abstain from eating the *sāl* fish. Their priests are usually degraded Brāhman Thākurs, and they will eat the leavings of Brāhmans. The period of mourning is thirty days, but the males do not shave their beards as Hindus do. It appears possible that they are the same as the Oriyā caste of Kandrās, for the Kandrās of Cuttack have the same five endogamous sub-castes, and in Balasore it is said that they belong to one caste, those residing in the south of the district being known as Kandrā and those in the north as Kadmā.

Kāsthās. The Kāsthās are a cultivating and landholding caste peculiar to this district and Balasore. The following account of this caste is quoted from Sir Herbert Risley's *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*. "It is divided into two sub-castes—Madhyasreni-Kāyasth and Kāsthā. The former, who are as a rule wealthier and more highly esteemed than the latter, claim to be the descendants of certain legendary Kāyasths who settled in Midnapore before the time of Ballāl Sena, and so completely lost touch with their brethren in Bengal, that even the growth of Kulinism passed

* Bengal Census Report of 1901, Part I, p. 407.

them by unnoticed, and there are no Kulins among them to this day. The same tradition represents the Kāsthā as the offspring of these Madhyasreni-Kāyasths by women of lower castes. The theory derives some support from the analogous case of Rājput families who have settled in outlying parts of the country, lost connection with their own people, and intermarried with the women of the land. It is, however, equally possible, and, in my opinion, rather more probable, that both Madhyasreni-Kāyasths and Kāsthās may be the descendants of an indigenous writer-tribe like the Karans of Orissa, the wealthier members of which disowned their humbler tribesmen and sought kinship with the well-known Kāyasth caste of Bengal. The fact that Kāsthās and Madhyasreni-Kāyasths are in possession of very old estates seems to tell in favour of this view.

"Kāsthās marry their daughters as infants, condemn the remarriage of widows, and do not recognize divorce. In one point, however, both divisions of the caste, and even the despised Karans of Orissa, are greatly in advance of the Kāyasths of Bengal. While they accept and act up to the sacerdotal view that untold spiritual evils will befall the man who does not get his daughters married before the age of puberty, they carefully guard against the physical dangers of the practice by forbidding the married couple to cohabit until the bride has arrived at sexual maturity. In matters of religious and ceremonial observances they are at all points orthodox Hindus. Most of them belong to the Vaishnava sect. Madhyasreni-Brāhmans officiate as their priests.

"Madhyasreni-Kāyasths occupy much the same position in Midnapore as the Kāyasths in Bengal proper and the Karans in Orissa. Their social rank is high, and Brāhmans take water from their hands. Some of them hold zamīndāris and substantial tenures, while the majority are engaged in clerical pursuits. Of late years, however, they have had to compete with true Kāyasths who have immigrated from Bengal and become domiciled in Midnapore. The Kāsthās are for the most part cultivators, tilling their own lands, but in the west of Midnapore a few of them are found holding estates."

The Rājus are a caste numerous only in Midnapore and Orissa. Their main occupation is cultivation, but a few are money-lenders and zamīndārs. They trace their origin to a certain Rājā Chauranga Deb of Orissa, who, when encamped at Jaleswar (Jellasore) or, as some say, Dāntan, fell in love with two girls, the one of the Vaisya and the other of the Dhobā caste. His descendants by the former are known as Dāina, and **Rājus.**

those by the latter as Bāyan. The females of the former class wind their *sāri* or skirt from the left, and those of the latter from the right side of the waist. The two groups do not intermarry. The Dāina subcaste considers itself superior to the Bāyan, and it forbids the remarriage of widows, which, though discouraged, still takes place occasionally amongst the Bāyans. It is reported that owing to the influence of their progenitor, the Rājus were formerly allowed to intermarry with the Sadgops of Bengal and the Chasās of Orissa, and this is said to account for their family names, of which Ghosh, Pāl and Datta are the same as those of the Sadgops, while Janā, Shāhāmal, Padhān, Mahānti, etc., are found amongst the Chasās. The Rājus rank with the Nabasākh group and are served by good Brāhmans. Some of their leading men are beginning to claim Kshattriya origin and to assume the sacred thread. The social and ceremonial practices of the caste are much the same as those of the Nabasākhs. At marriage the essential portion of the ceremony is the binding together of the hands of the bride and bridegroom with *kusha* grass. In the case of virgin wives the right hands, and in the case of widows who marry again the left hands, are bound together. A bride of the Bāyan subcaste ties a small quantity of ashes in the corner of her *sāri*, which is supposed to be a token of her descent from a Dhobā.*

Siyalgirs. The Siyalgirs are a small community residing in the Mohanpur outpost of the Dāntan thāna. They speak a dialect of Gujarāti and are supposed to have immigrated from the west some five or six generations ago, but nothing is known regarding the precise time of the settlement or the reasons which led to it. They are said to have thievish proclivities, and may possibly be the descendants of some wandering Bhil tribe which found its way to Midnapore and stayed there. They now follow a variety of occupations; some sell fish, some make and sell bamboo mats, some are cultivators, and a few sell groceries. They profess the Hindu religion, but have no Brāhmans to perform their ceremonies. Their priests are men of the tribe, called Parāmāniks, who have picked up a smattering of religious lore. The dead are buried, not burnt.†

Suklis. The Suklis are a small cultivating caste peculiar to the district of Midnapore. They claim to be the descendants of a Sulanki Rājput named Bīr Singh, who came to Midnapore about six hundred years ago and built himself a fort at Bīrsinghpur in *pargana* Kedārkunda. The fort, of which the remains are

* Bengal Census Report of 1901, Part I, p. 426.

† Bengal Census Report of 1901, Part I, p. 435.

still visible, is flanked by two large mounds, called Mundāmārui and Gardāmārui, the former of which is said to cover the heads, and the latter the bodies, of 700 Bāgdis, who were slain by Bīr Singh because they could not pronounce the word *hesh*, meaning a mat made of date leaves. The legend goes on to say that after a time Bīr Singh himself was defeated, and that his followers then discarded the sacred thread, changed the name Sulanki to Sukli, and settled down as cultivators.

The internal structure of the caste throws no light on its origin. It is divided into three subcastes—Barabhāiyā, Bāhattarghari, and Dasāsai. The first, which is reckoned the highest in rank, is supposed to be descended from the twelve grandsons of Bīr Singh. Their sections are of the ordinary Brāhmanical type. Suklis marry their daughters as infants, forbid widow remarriage and do not recognize divorce. For religious and ceremonial purposes they employ Brāhmans, who, however, are not received on equal terms by other members of the sacred order. Most of the caste are Vaishnavas. They burn their dead and perform the ceremony of *srāddha* in the orthodox fashion on the 31st day after death. Notwithstanding their conformity with all standard observances, the social position of the Suklis is very low. They rank with Pods and Dhobās, and Brāhmans will not take water from their hands. Agriculture is their sole occupation. A few hold tenures and small zamīndāris, the bulk of the caste being occupancy ryots.*

Tuntias. The Tuntias or Tutias are a Muhammadan caste whose traditional occupation is the cultivation of the mulberry tree (*tunt*) for feeding silk worms. Of late years this occupation has become less profitable and many have taken to ordinary cultivation and field labour, while some twist rope from a reed called *sar*. As a community they have a bad reputation, and many of them are professional thieves and dacoits. They are regarded as a degraded class, and other Muhammadans will not give them their daughters in marriage, though they have no objection to receiving Tuntia girls as wives. Males of the ordinary Ajlāf class will usually eat with Tuntias, but their wives will not associate in any way with the women.†

RELIGIOUS GATHERINGS. On the occasion of the Snānjātrā, held in Asārh, some 10,000 persons assemble at Gopīballabhpur and bathe in the river Subarnarekhā. On the Bārunī day in Chaitra a religious gathering takes place at Deulbār in the Gopīballabhpur thāna to view the Tapoban, where Lava and Kush, the sons of Rāma, are said to have

* Tribes and Castes of Bengal, Vol. II, Part I, pp. 273-4.

† Bengal Census Report of 1901, Part I, p. 451.

been born. Another religious fair, called the Tulsichaurajat, is held annually in the village of Koland in the Sābang thāna on the day following the Makar Sankrānti festival, which takes place on the last day of Paus. Some 4,000 to 5,000 persons come on this occasion and make offerings to the god Gokulananda. In the Contai subdivision large numbers assemble at Junput to bathe in the sea on the occasion of Paus Sankrānti, and at Egra on the occasion of the Sivarātrī. In the Ghātāl subdivision several thousands assemble at Chandrakonā to witness the Rathjātrā or car festival, and another religious gathering takes place at Ghātāl on the Makar Sankrānti day.

Besides these festivals, *punya* day is celebrated with some ceremony in parts of the district. On this, the first day of the *Amli* year, ryots pay part of their rents to the zamīndārs, and customers pay some of their dues to shopkeepers, who in return distribute sweetmeats among them. Among the lower classes Bāruni *pūjā* and Ind *pūjā*, which are held in Bhādra (September) in honour of Indra, the god of rain, are occasions of festivity. When the latter is celebrated, a long post is put up in the ground and decorated with flowers, etc. The Charak Puja is another popular festival: a former District Officer states that hook-swinging still goes on, in spite of all efforts made to stop it, and that he has seen fresh hook-swinging mark in the backs of six out of eight *pālki*-bearers collected by chance. When cholera or small-pox breaks out, the villagers worship Sitalā, the goddess of these epidemics. They also celebrate *Hari Sankirtan* and hold *Chandi Mangal*, *Mahatsab*, *Astam Prahar* and *Chabbis Prahar*, when the name of Hari is shouted day and night and crowds of people are feasted. These terms are explained below.

Hari Sankirtan—A number of persons sing the praises of Hari or God, playing on musical instruments, and sometimes forming processions in the streets. *Chandi Mangal*—A party, like a *jātrā* party, sing songs in praise of Chandi or Durgā, playing on musical instruments. *Mahatsab* is a festival at which offerings are made to Chaitanya or Gaurānga, the great Vaishnavite reformer, as well as to his companions and disciples, and a large number of people are feasted. It is also accompanied by *Hari Sankirtan*. *Astam Prahar* and *Chabbis Prahar* are festivals in which people perform *Hari Sankirtan*, playing on different musical instruments and feasting one another. The difference between the two is that the former lasts for a whole day and night, while the latter lasts for three days and nights. In the *Astam Prahar* offerings are made on one day only, while in *Chabbis Prahar* they are made on three days.

The *jātrā* is one of the most popular entertainments in the district. It consists of the performance of a mythological piece, generally selected from the Rāmāyana or Mahābhārata. The performers are organized parties of musicians called *jātrāwālās*, each party consisting of men and boys who represent different characters; the female parts are taken by some of the boys or men with clean-shaven faces. They sing, dance, and also give musical concerts. They are, in fact, professionals, who are hired out to give performances in the houses of well-to-do people on the occasion of the Durgā Pūjā and other religious and wedding festivities. They are also engaged for the *bārayāris* organized by the people of one or more neighbouring villages, who raise subscriptions amongst themselves to pay their fees. Usually, the performances are given at night, and are continued for several nights. They are keenly enjoyed by the simple rustics, male and female, Hindu and Muhammadan. **AMUSEMENTS.**

The *bārayāris* or *barwāris* mentioned above are occasional entertainments of a semi-religious character got up in the more opulent villages. The villagers raise a fund for their performance by means of subscriptions, and from this fund the expenses of making offerings to some gods or goddesses are met. The image of the deity worshipped is set up in a public place, and *jātrās* are given at night. Sometimes thousands of rupees are spent by the villagers in this way. *Kabi* is another popular entertainment consisting of matches between parties of professional singers. The headman of one party recites impromptu verses, which are repeated by his followers, and then the other party follows suit. The verses recited generally deal with some religious theme, but in their keenness to outdo one another, the performers, at least in public places, rally and ridicule their rivals with rhymes of an abusive character. The whole performance is thus strikingly like that described by Horace :— *Fescennina per hunc inventa licentia morem Versibus alternis opprobia rustica fudit.*

When *kirtan* takes place, the praises of the deity are sung by a number of persons, who use several musical instruments and dance in slow time to music. Sometimes one man, with a number of followers, forms a party like a *jātrā* party and recites verses from the Bhāgavat and other religious books, generally in praise of Krishna, his followers repeating them after him. Three or four persons are required for the performance of *goda-bharat*. Their leader recites poems, generally of his own composition, the subject-matter being taken from the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata. The singing is accompanied by a quick lively

dance. During the course of the performance the leader makes extempore riddles in verse on any subject selected by the audience. *Champābatī* is a play extolling the omnipotence of the deity and the chastity of females, which is performed mainly in the Oriyā language. The legend is that Champābatī's husband, when going on a voyage, offended a *fakīr*, who was really a god in disguise. To avenge the insult, the *fakīr* instigated a tailor to metamorphose Champābatī into a dog, while her husband and her brothers were transformed into trees. Subsequently the god relented, and with his help a relation of Champābatī killed the tailor and rescued his relations. The *pānchāli* is a musical entertainment in which two persons sing sacred songs for the entertainment of the people.

VILLAGE SYSTEM.*

In Midnapore the indigenous village system has lost nearly all its vitality, and is now represented only by the village headmen. They too, however, have lost the power and influence they once possessed, and at present are, to a great extent, and throughout almost the whole district, merely creatures of the zamīndārs. In some instances son has succeeded father in the office of village headman for two or more generations; but the office cannot be called hereditary, as each succeeding appointment is made by the zamīndār. Not infrequently the villagers nominate the candidate, but the confirmation of the appointment rests with the zamīndār. There are five designations by which the village headmen are known, viz., *baruā, mukhya, mandal, āmīn* and *pradhān*, of whose duties, responsibilities and remuneration a brief account is given below.

Baruā.

The *baruā* is the headman of a village in the Hijilī portion of the district. He acts as the representative of the villagers in important matters, assists police and revenue officers employed on duty, and furnishes information, if required by those officers. He receives gifts from the villagers when marriages and other ceremonies take place, and the zamīndār also allows him slight remissions in his rent. The official position and remuneration of the *baruā* have undergone considerable modifications. At the time of the settlement of Hijilī, these officers received an allowance of one-half per cent. of the village assessment (*jamābandi*), secured by certificates or *chhārs*, which were much prized by the holders. The duties for which the certificate granting the commission of half per cent. was given, were the following. The *baruā* was expected to preserve the boundary marks of the fields, and to point them out when required; to

* This account of the village system is mainly reproduced from Sir W. W. Hunter's Statistical Account of Bengal, Vol. III, 1876.

attend any officer of Government; to share in some measure with the *chaukīdār* or village watchman the task of keeping order; and to aid in the internal administration of the village. The direct commission or salary from Government was subsequently done away with; but the *baruās* still receive the amount, or its equivalent, from the landholders, ordinarily in the shape of a deduction from the rent payable by them to the zamīndārs. The appointment and dismissal of *baruās*, which were formerly made by the zamīndārs with the general consent of the villagers, now rests with the Collector and Magistrate of the district, by whom registers of them are kept.

The *mukhya* is the headman of a village in the permanently-settled parts of the district; what the *baruā* does in Hijilī is done by the *mukhya* in other parts of Midnapore. His appointment and dismissal, however, rest with the zamīndār. He gets no salary or remission of rent from the zamīndār, but receives presents from the villagers on their marriages and other occasions. *Mukhya.*

The *mandal* is also the headman of a village, chiefly in the jungly western tract. Being the tenant-in-chief, he sees to the cultivation of the village lands, and to the settlement of under-tenants on them. In some parts of the district the *mandal* is the same as the *mukhya* described above. *Mandal.*

The *pradhān* is an officer found in the west of the district, who undertakes and is responsible for the collection of rents from the villagers. He sometimes holds one large village and sometimes several small villages, and receives as his remuneration 12½ to 15 per cent. of the gross assets of the village or villages assigned to his charge. His post is generally hereditary, but he can be turned out if he defaults. The *māhaldār* is an officer responsible for the collections of several *pradhāns* and for their payment to the zamīndār. *Pradhān.*

The *āmīn* is one of the principal cultivators, whose customary duty it is to give receipts certifying service of court processes, and to wait on and help the police or other public officers in their inquiries regarding offences, revenue matters, etc. The *ātghariā* performs the same functions in the Hijilī tract as the *āmīn* does elsewhere. The name *āmīn* is also given to the landlord's servant, whose chief duty is to measure the lands of cultivators when there are disputes among them about boundaries, etc., or for the purpose of assessing rent on the part of the zamīndār. *Amīn.*

The *bhadra* is an officer selected by the general consent of the villagers to be a general referee. Sitting with the *mukhya*, he settles disputes between the villagers. On marriages and other occasions he receives some token of respect from the *Bhadra.*

villagers, which ordinarily takes the form of betel-leaves and nuts.

Among other persons who play an important part in village life, the following may be mentioned :—

The *purohit* or village priest, who is usually a Brāhman, worships the idols in the houses of his constituents, and utters sacred formulas (*mantras*) at marriages, funeral rites, and other religious and social ceremonies. He is paid by a money remuneration called *dakshinā*.

The *ganak* or *āchārjya* is an astrologer and fortune-teller. He is eagerly sought after by the villagers to tell them how to find or recover anything that is missing or lost, to give accounts of the health of absent relatives, and to prescribe a propitious moment for the commencement of important business, and so forth. The smallest remuneration that he gets consists of two pounds of rice and a betel-nut, or a pice and a betel-nut. In old times *ganaks* obtained rent-free lands from the zamīndārs, called *ganakottar*.

The *gunin* or *guni* is a person, who exorcises people believed to be possessed by an evil spirit or under the influence of a witch; also houses which have the reputation of being haunted, or individuals who have been bitten by poisonous snakes. The villagers place superstitious confidence in a *gunin*, and credit him with the power of counteracting the evil effects of charms and incantations. He is generally remunerated in money.

The *parāmānik* is the headman among the lower castes. He decides questions affecting their caste and other social matters, and receives in return tokens of attention from them in the shape of presents in money, grain, or clothes.

Village system in Jungle Mahāls.

The village system in the Jungle Mahāls, *i.e.*, the tract to the west of Midnapore which is largely inhabited by Santāls and other aboriginal tribes, is described as follows in a report on the Nayābasān estate submitted in 1883-84: "The rents in general are collected not from the cultivators direct, but from the representative ryots, called *mandals* or *pradhāns*, who are generally appointed from among the people of the place for five to seven years. They sometimes hold one large village and sometimes a group of several small villages. They receive for their remuneration usually from 12½ to 15 per cent. of the gross assets of the village or group of villages assigned to their charge. The post of a *mandal* or *pradhān* is, as a general rule, treated as hereditary, but when a *pradhān* defaults, he can be turned out. He is responsible for the rent of his area, whether he collects it or not from the ryots. If a ryot defaults, the *pradhān* has

to sue in the Civil Court. The *pradhān* does not furnish accounts. This is the system prevalent in the jungle mahāls of Midnapore. In the few villages which are now under *khās* collection properly so called, *i.e.*, in which collections are made by *gumāshtas* paid by the estate, there were formerly *pradhāns* who fell into arrears and were therefore ousted.

"In each large village, or in each group of two to five small villages, there is a *barua*, a *chaukīdār*, a *chetyal* and a *deluria*. The *barua* gets Rs. 2 or Rs. 3 a year from the estate, and sometimes from the villagers. The remuneration he gets from the zamīndār is paid by the *pradhān*, who recoups himself by adding it to the *saranjami* or collection expenses he receives from the estate. The *barua's* duty is principally to assist in collecting the rent. Each *chaukīdār* holds free of rent 10 *bighās* of land from the estate in lieu of wages. His post is generally hereditary. The *chetyal* is paid Rs. 2 or Rs. 3 per annum by the *pradhān* from his *saranjami*, but he is appointed by the estate. The *deluria* is in charge of the *pūjā* or worship expenses of the village idols. He holds a small quantity of rent-free land to defray the expenses of worship as well as for his own maintenance. He also receives occasional contributions from the villagers. Besides the above village servants, there are 68 *paiks* in the two divisions of the estate (Nayābasān and Rohini). Over every ten or twelve of these *paiks* there is a headman known as *bhaluk*, and over four *bhaluks* there is a headman called *dalbehārā* or *dolsedar*. The duties of the *dolsedars* are to assist the estate in the collection of rent from the *pradhāns* and sometimes (when deputed) to assist the *pradhāns* in their collection of rent from the ryots. They also keep watch at the estate *kachharis* and do other such work. To each *paik* are assigned 15 *bighās* of land in lieu of wages; similarly, to a *bhaluk* 25 *bighās*, and to the *dalbehārā* 40 *bighās*."

VILLAGE CUSTOMS.

The following account of village customs in Patāspur is quoted from the report on the settlement of eighteen temporarily-settled estates in that *pargana* by Bābu Girish Chandra Datt (1898): —"This *pargana* originally formed a part of Orissa and was not included in the district of Midnapore till 1825. The customs of the people of the *pargana*, therefore, are more like those of the people of Orissa than like those of Bengal. All the old families are Oriyās by origin, and so have the same customs and traditions as the Oriyās. The cultivators always consult the village astrologer or their almanacs, if they can read themselves, as regards auspicious days for beginning work at every important stage of the agricultural operations, such as ploughing,

sowing, harvesting, etc. On every full moon and new moon day ploughing is forbidden. On the Sankrāntī day (*i.e.*, the first day according to the Amli almanac) of Bhādra, Aswin, Kārtik, Māgh and Chaitra ploughing is prohibited. Besides the above, there are over forty other days in the year, such as Akshaya Tritīyā (third day of the full moon of Baisākh), Dasaharā (tenth day of the full moon in Jaista), Ambubāchī (first three days of Asārh), Durgā Pūjā, etc., on which peasants refrain from ploughing. The Telis or oilmen also stop their oil-mills, which are drawn by bullocks on those days on which ploughing is prohibited. These are observed not only as days of rest, but also of worship.

"On the three days of Srabanā Nakshatra (a certain constellation of stars) in every month no work of tying or binding, such as thatching, *tatti* preparing, etc., is done. On the Akshaya Tritīyā day (third day of the new moon in Baisākh), every ryot must begin sowing, at least he must scatter a few handfuls of seed grains on the north-east corner of his field, without ploughing the same. On the first day of ploughing (for which auspicious days are indicated in the year's almanac) the ploughshare is worshipped by the farmer, and the plough is drawn only two and-a-half times north to south across the field. But there is another tradition according to which, if it rains before the *khāmār* or threshing floor is cleared of paddy in the preceding year, then ploughing may be begun on any day, and there is no need for an auspicious day for the purpose. Reaping is generally begun on a Friday in the new moon of Kārtik or Aghrān. The first sheaf cut is brought, and kept on the thatch of the bedroom. On the plot of land which is reaped last, three paddy plants, which are separately cut, are buried.

"Then on the Makar Sankrānti day (Oriyā first day of Māgh) the buried plants are exhumed, and are worshipped. The plants are then brought and kept with the first-cut paddy plants on the thatch of the hut. Then the whole is placed on the *khāmār* and worshipped after evening when the jackal's cry is heard. It is believed that the harvest next year will be best in the direction from which the jackal's cry is first heard on this occasion. The *khāmār* worship is done by the peasants themselves, and not with the aid of priests. On the Garbhan Sankrānti day (the first day of Kārtik) branches of *garbhan* trees and certain weeds and other things are fixed in the fields, houses, and places of worship as safeguards against casualties happening to the crops. On the Gobardhan Jātrā day (the first day of the new moon of Kārtik) the peasants worship their cattle with garlands of flowers, etc., and

on the Gomah Pūrnimā day (full moon day of the month of Srāban) cattle are also worshipped and fed with cakes and grass. On the first day of Aswin (Oriyā month) all blacksmiths, goldsmiths, carpenters, masons, and potters worship their respective implements of art, which they call Biswakarmā *puja*. On that day, and on the day following, they do not touch their instruments."

CHAPTER IV.

PUBLIC HEALTH.

GENERAL CONDITIONS.

In the north and north-west of the district there are lateritic uplands with intervening depressions, which ensure a good system of natural drainage. Fever is not so prevalent as in the low-lying country; and the people, who are mainly hardy aboriginals, escape, to a large extent, the epidemics of cholera and small-pox which break out nearly every year in other parts of the district. The second natural division consists of the alluvial country, much of which is water-logged and the home of malarial fever. It is exposed to inundation from the numerous fresh-water and tidal rivers which traverse it. Large embankments have been built along their banks to protect the fields, but breaches are apt to occur during the rains, and then many square miles are submerged, the outlets being insufficient to carry off the flood water. This affects the public health in two ways. On the one hand, the flood water scours out holes and ditches, and carries off surface filth and rotting vegetation, depositing a protective layer of silt. On the other hand, the stagnant water, slowly drying up, affords a congenial breeding ground for malaria-bearing mosquitoes. There are thus two divergent effects. At first, the flood water cleanses the country and cholera disappears. After the floods are over, there are large collections of stagnant water, and fever becomes rife.

As regards the different subdivisions of the district, the Contai and Tamlūk subdivisions, which lie along the sea-coast and the estuary of the Hooghly, are comparatively free from malaria. The Ghātāl subdivision further north slopes back from the bank of the Rūpnārāyan; the soil is a rich alluvium, but much of its area is liable to floods, and though excellent crops are reaped, the inhabitants suffer greatly from malaria. The headquarters subdivision consists, in the north and west, of thinly wooded and rocky uplands; here the laterite soil is dry and the climate is good. Towards the east and south the level dips, and a swampy hollow is formed between the elevated country to the west and the comparatively high ground along the coast. In the Ghātal subdivision conditions are similar, the north and west being fairly

high, while the south and east are swampy and subject to severe malarial fever.

PRINCIPAL DISEASES. The prevailing diseases of Midnapore are malarial fevers, with their various sequelæ, bowel-complaints, *e.g.*, dysentery and diarrhœa, small-pox and cholera. Hepatitis and spleen affections are common, especially in certain tracts. Elephantiasis is frequent in the littoral and swampy portions of the district, and cases of leprosy are occasionally met with.

Fevers. The types of malarial fevers most frequently diagnosed are quotidian and tertian, both double and single, the quartan not being so common. Other fevers observed in Midnapore are seven-day and fourteen-day cachexial fever.

The following are also reported :—(1) Bilious remittent fever is a distinct type and very common. (2) Typhoid fever, without the typical rash and hæmorrhage, but with other characteristic symptoms, such as temperature and intestinal symptoms. (3) Thermic fever of a mild type due to exposure to the sun's rays. Headache, vomiting and high temperatures are characteristic symptoms; it is very amenable to treatment. (4) Cerebro-spinal fever occurs at all times of the year sporadically. (5) Influenza is very common, especially during the changes of the seasons. (6) Inflammatory types, specific and non-specific. (7) Elephantoid fevers, which are very common.

Burdwān fever. The district suffered severely from the epidemic of fever known as Burdwān fever, which is now believed to be not malarial, but due to infection with the Leishman-Donovan body, and akin to, if not identical with, *Kala-azar*; it is also known as cachexial fever. This fever made its appearance in the north of the district in 1871. Next year a great southern extension took place, the epidemic passing from north to south through the whole of the alluvial country in the centre of the district. The third year the epidemic was at its worst, the mortality being twice as great as in the preceding year, but in 1874 it was less fatal and less prevalent. In 1875 the same facts were observed again, and what fever there was wanted the virulence of the epidemic, and had some of the characteristics of the ordinary seasonal malarious fever of the country.

During the first year of its invasion the fever was mild; there was a simultaneous increase of the general endemic fever, and a subsidence of both, usual at the end of the fever season. In the second year the fever began earlier, lasted longer and caused greater mortality. During the third year the disease was marked with still larger fatality both from primary attacks and secondary complications, the systems of those who had survived the two

previous years being now so undermined that they had little power to resist the attacks of the fever and fell rapid victims to it. During the fourth, fifth and sixth years (six years being the average duration of the fever in any place), there was a general slow recovery; the fever in each successive year attacked fewer persons, was of a less fatal type, and prevailed for a shorter period. It finally disappeared altogether in the seventh year, but left many of its victims with permanently enlarged spleens and other sequelæ. The total mortality caused by the epidemic in Midnapore during the years in which it raged was estimated at 250,000.

Another severe epidemic broke out in the east of the district in 1881, which subsequently spread southwards, losing its violence, however, as it extended. It ultimately made its influence felt in the tracts forming the coast belt of Tamlūk and Contai. Its progress was not uniform but subject to local and seasonal variations, and, where it was most persistent, it left its impress in the shape of cachexia and spleen.

Cholera.

Cholera is endemic in the district and is practically always present in some part or other of it. At times the disease appears in village after village, especially in some parts of the Tamlūk and Contai subdivisions, selecting a few victims from each but causing a heavy mortality on the whole. It is more especially prevalent in the hot weather just before the rains, when both well and tank water becomes scanty and foul, and subsides with the breaking of the rains. Outbreaks also appear in the cold weather months of December and January. The number and severity of the epidemics have diminished since the opening of the railway, as the pilgrims going to and from Purī no longer throng the roads, spreading the disease in their train.

Small-pox.

The mortality from small-pox is as a rule inconsiderable, but occasional epidemics break out. The worst on record occurred in 1902 and caused 17,841 deaths, representing a mortality of no less than 6·39 per mille.

Dysentery.

Dysentery is common in Midnapore, and in the Central Jail the mortality due to it has long been the subject of special attention. Two forms are commonly met with, *viz.*, a simple form amenable to treatment, if prompt and suitable, and a chronic relapsing form, which is frequently imported with the prisoner and which is very difficult to treat successfully. A special investigation into the causation of the disease was made in 1906-07 by Captain W. E. H. Forster, I.M.S., by whom a method of vaccine therapy was introduced with the result that

the death-rate due to dysentery fell from 25·8 per mille in 1906 to 3·8 per mille in 1907.

The following is a brief summary of the more important conclusions arrived at:—Jail dysentery is most commonly due to the bacillus of Shiga. Amœbæ are very seldom found in primary attacks, and are much more frequent in chronic cases with a history of previous attacks. Dysentery, according to Captain Forster, is not spread by dust, nor by water, nor by infection of the food-supply, nor by suctorial insects, nor by soil infection, nor does the infection cling to wards or buildings. All the available evidence points to the spread of dysentery by case-to-case infection and by convalescents as bacilli-carriers. Each recovered or convalescent dysentery patient retains in his intestines for a longer or shorter period a large number of the dysentery bacilli and passes them in his stools, even after apparent recovery. The extra-corporeal stage of dysentery is very short. Blankets and prison clothing were saturated with living emulsions of the dysentery bacilli, and on exposure to the sun's rays the bacilli were killed in two hours. Again, blankets and clothing saturated by dysentery bacilli emulsions were put away stored in almirahs, and the bacilli were found dead within three days.

The curve of dysentery cases closely follows the rainfall curve, the dysentery curve attaining its maximum one month after the rainfall curve. The period of minimum incidence corresponds with the dry hot months. Most of the dysentery cases that were examined occurred either among under-trial prisoners, or in the segregation wards, *i.e.*, among recent arrivals from outside, or among the convalescent gangs, *i.e.*, among those who had recently been more or less in contact with cases in hospital. Cases of dysentery due to Shiga's bacillus are liable to assume a chronic or relapsing character, and convalescents of this type are very dangerous as carriers and spreaders of the bacilli. From the above the following measure of prophylaxis are to be deduced:—(1) General attention to sanitation. (2) Early admission and prompt treatment of cases. (3) Detention of cases in hospital till they have become "absolutely well for at least a fortnight." (4) The segregation of convalescents for at least a month after their discharge from hospital.*

Stone in the bladder.

Stone in the bladder appears to be common in the Contai subdivision, a paper published by Bābu Jādab Krishna Sen, Assistant Surgeon at Contai, showing that he met with 127 cases in less than eleven years, viz., renal calculi (3), vesical (71),

* Administration Report on the Jails of Bengal for 1907, p. 19.

urethral (52), and preputial (1). Regarding its causation, he wrote :—"The principal cause of stone amongst the people of Contai appears to me to be the disorders of the digestive system associated with the elephantiasis of the upper and lower extremities and thickening of the lymphatic vessels and glands. I noticed similar disorders of the digestive system associated with goitre amongst the people of Ganda and with hydrocele amongst the people in Fyzabad, in Oudh, where stone is very common. There was nothing common in them as regards food, climate, locality, habits and physical conditions, and other predisposing causes which influence the formation of stones. I have seen the weak and indolent Bengalis of Contai, who live upon rice and fish, and inhabit a tract of country bordering on and almost on the same level with the sea, suffer equally with the strong and energetic Rajputs, who not only live upon wheat and meat, but also inhabit a dry and elevated country several hundred feet above the sea-level. The only thing I observed common in them was disorders of the digestive system associated with glandular affection. . . . The stones in most of my cases were small and fit for removal by crushing." *

INFIRMITIES.

The marginal table shows the number of persons afflicted per 100,000 of the population according to the census of 1901. In the case of lepers the proportion is considerably above the average for Bengal as a whole, but in the case of deaf-mutes it is below it; while in the case of insane and blind persons the figures are very much the same. The number of successful operations for cataract during the five years 1896-1900 was 246 (198 males and 48 females).

	Male.	Female.
Blind	97	87
Lepers	91	31
Deaf-mutes	59	31
Insane	36	19

VACCINATION.

Vaccination is only compulsory in the towns of Midnapore, Ghātāl, Kharār, Chandrakonā, Râmjibanpur, Khirpai, and Tamlūk, being introduced in Kharār in 1889, and in the other towns in 1883. Altogether 1,23,694 persons were successfully vaccinated in 1907-08, representing 45·82 per mille of the population, while the average annual ratio for the preceding five years was 39·26 per mille. The number of infants protected by vaccination in the same year was no less than 57·9 per cent. This record is better than that of most other districts of Bengal, but the reverse was the case a few years ago, when it was reported that vaccination was extremely backward in Midnapore, a smaller proportion of the people being protected than in any other regulation district of the Province except those of Orissa.

* *Indian Medical Gazette*, 1902, pp. 311-13.

Inoculation was formerly common, and, even after the extension to the district of the Act prohibiting it [IV (B. C.) of 1865], was habitually practised in villages along the sea-coast for some years. It was continued clandestinely in some areas only twenty years ago, but has now disappeared, and vaccination is accepted readily by the people.

MEDICAL INSTITUTIONS.

The following table contains a list of the Government dispensaries of the district and gives the salient statistics for them during the year 1908. The oldest of the dispensaries are those at Midnapore established in 1835, Tamlūk (1851) and Garhbeta (1868). The dispensaries at Midnapore, Contai and Nandigrām have an invested capital of Rs. 31,000, Rs. 2,400 and Rs. 5,200 respectively:—

NAME OF DISPENSARY.	INCOME FROM—					Expenditure.	TOTAL NUMBER TREATED—			Daily average number of in-patients.	Daily average number of out-patients.
	Municipal grant.	District Board grant.	Government grant.	Private subscriptions, endowments, etc.	Total.		In-patients.	Out-patients	Total.		
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.					
Chandrakonā	760	315	280	192	1,547	1,221	...	8,402	8,402	...	92·38
Contai	...	360	1,491	1,062	2,913	2,991	167	15,580	15,747	6·61	86·62
Dāntan	...	156	867	1,297	2,320	1,780	158	10,003	10,161	4·66	61·70
Garhbeta	...	336	207	562	1,105	1,250	...	3,916	3,916	...	33·67
Geonkhāli... ...	...	780	12	134	926	785	32	4,135	4,167	0·56	21·76
Ghātāl	1,200	180	713	288	2,381	1,462	71	5,245	5,316	3·53	34·92
Kharār	662	240	11	257	1,170	942	...	4,843	4,843	...	32·37
Khirpai	600	225	112	58	995	798	...	5,124	5,124	...	35·19
Midnapore ...	3,600	2,550	775	6,720	13,645	11,256	853	9,259	10,112	34·82	69·83
Nandigrām ...	...	360	110	1,020	1,490	1,420	...	6,613	6,613	...	32·40
Rāmjibanpur ...	267	204	514	109	1,094	1,094	...	5,155	5,155	...	54·54
Tamlūk	1,115	180	484	864	2,643	2,051	76	6,245	6,321	2·32	38·48

CHAPTER V.

AGRICULTURE.

GENERAL CONDITIONS.

THE south and east of the district are an alluvial tract similar to most districts of the Gangetic plain in Lower Bengal. The rainfall is considerably greater than in the uplands to the north, and the soil, which consists of sand and clay brought down by the great rivers from the country above, produces abundant crops of rice. Along the sea-coast, and in the low-lying country traversed by tidal rivers and creeks, it is necessary to raise embankments called *bheris* to keep out the salt water. Other rivers are liable to sudden freshets after heavy rainfall in the neighbouring hills, and, their beds being in many cases higher than the cultivated land, are apt to overflow and cause serious damage to standing crops. When such inundations occur, large areas are laid waste by deposits of sand, while the lower ground is converted, for the time being, into a lagoon. To keep out these floods, many embankments have been constructed round considerable areas, called "circuits." Cross-dams are also erected in the beds of most of the non-tidal rivers, which are mere streams in the dry weather, in order to divert the water to the cultivated lands in their neighbourhood. Much of the alluvial tract is consequently covered with a network of embankments and cross-dams, one result of which has been to restrict the action of the tides and so to cause the mouths of the rivers to silt up. Consequently, after heavy rainfall the drainage is imperfect and large tracts are water-logged.

The north and west of the district consist mainly of a lateritic upland tract, sloping upwards towards the Chotā Nāgpur plateau, and still largely covered with scrub jungle, in which the best lands are found at the bottoms of depressions between successive ridges. These low lands are highly valued, both because they form catchment basins retaining moisture, and also because the soil is enriched by the detritus washed down from the slopes. Rice is grown in such depressions as well as along the slopes of ridges (*sholās*). There is much terraced cultivation on the latter, the fields being laid out in a series of steps each higher than the

other. They are enclosed by small artificial banks, by means of which water is retained and allowed to drain off on to the fields below. Maize, millets, oil-seeds and pulses are grown on the uplands, but the crests of the ridges are infertile, though they are well suited for the growth of trees, such as *sāl*, tamarind, and *mahuā*. Speaking generally, the soil in this part of the district is on the whole poor, being composed of laterite and coarse sand, sometimes cemented together in a more or less coherent mass, at other times remaining loose and gravelly, and passing by various gradations into sandy clay with a few ferruginous nodules.

IRRIGATION. The main source of irrigation is the Midnapore high-level canal, which takes off from an anicut across the Kasai river just below the town of Midnapore and runs eastwards to Uluberiā on the river Hooghly. An account of this canal will be given in Chapter VII, and it will be sufficient to state here that on the average 76,000 acres were irrigated annually from it and its distributaries during the ten years 1891-1900, while 70,419 acres were irrigated in 1907-08; the maximum area irrigated was 104,149 acres in 1881-82. Practically all the area irrigated by this canal is under winter rice, 90 per cent. being sown broadcast. Experiments made by the Public Works Department in a year of good rainfall on irrigated and non-irrigated lands in the area served by the canal show that the outturn per acre is :—(1) 23½ maunds of paddy and 69 maunds of straw in irrigated lands; (2) 20½ maunds of paddy and 54 maunds of straw in non-irrigated lands.

Water is also obtained for irrigation by means of embankments built across drainage slopes and low-lying depressions. These embankments (*bāndhs*) form small reservoirs, in which water accumulates during the rainy season. When the rice fields require water, the *bāndh* is simply cut in a few places, and water is thus let on to the fields at a lower level. Small dams are similarly built across the beds of streams, by which water is impounded for the irrigation of rice grown below their banks. The water in tanks is also used for the purposes of cultivation, but there is little or no irrigation from wells.

Water-lifts. There are two water-lifts in common use for irrigation, viz., the *simni* and *dongā*. The *simni* is a thickly woven triangular-shaped bamboo basket with four pieces of rope attached to it. Two men, each holding two ropes, and standing on either side of the mouth of the channel, through which the water is carried to the fields, lower and raise the basket with no little dexterity. If water is required at a higher level,

it is raised to the level of the field in two or more stages, each requiring as many sets of men. As this considerably increases the cost of cultivation, this mode of irrigating land is seldom resorted to when the height is great. Two men in a working day of eight hours can raise sufficient water for irrigating one *bighā* of sugarcane.

Water is sometimes raised from tanks or *jhils* by a canoe-shaped wooden vessel called a *dongā*. One end of the *dongā* rests on the mouth of the channel by which the water is led to the field. The other end is attached by a rope to a long bamboo pole, which rests on the forked branches of a tree trunk or on two uprights fixed near the mouth of the channel. A lump of earth or stone at the opposite extremity of the pole counterpoises the *dongā*. A man successively raises and lowers the *dongā* by means of the rope and can irrigate about one *bighā* a day.

CLASSES OF LAND.

Cultivable land may be divided into three classes, viz., high land, low land, and *diāra* or river land. The high land round the village-sites, which is more or less sandy, and is either above ordinary flood level or dries up in time to enable it to be sown with *rabi* crops, is called *kāla*. It is subdivided into *bāstu* or homestead land, and *dhosa*, *i.e.*, land which during the rains is sown with *āus* paddy and in the cold weather bears a second crop of pulses or oilseeds. The low-lying lands separating the village-sites from one another are called *jalā*. This land is mostly clayey and is under water during the rains. Practically the only crop grown on it is rice, but in rare cases, when near homesteads, a little summer *til* is grown. *Diāra* lands formed by river silt deposited on the beds and sides of rivers are the most sought after by the ryots, as they are renovated every year during the rains by a deposit of silt and require no manure. They are most suitable for growing *rabi* crops, pulses, wheat, barley, oil-seeds and various vegetables. In the Contai and Tamlūk subdivisions cultivable land is called *madhur*, or sweet, as opposed to *nimaki*, or land impregnated with salt.

SOILS.

In the alluvial tract a clay soil is known as *entel* or *ethel*, loam as *doash*, *dorash* or *doseta*, and sandy loam as *bele doash*. In the laterite tract the soils are mostly loam and sandy loam, having the same names as in the alluvial portion, but their colour is reddish-brown, and they are inferior in fertility to the corresponding types of soil in the alluvial tract.

Clay soil is subdivided into the following classes :—(1) *Ghara ethel*, a very hard clay, the colour of which varies from blackish to yellowish. It is a poor soil requiring much manuring. (2) *Nora ethel* or *kush māti* is found near the sea and the tidal rivers

and *khāls*. It is impregnated with salt, and is unfit for cultivation. Sticky and slippery during the rains, it gets very hard during the dry season, when it has a white coating over the surface. (3) *Banmāti* (sometimes called also *pashu māti*) is a soft soil of a reddish colour suitable for rice. (4) *Dudhe ethel* is a soft white soil used for making mud walls. (5) *Kāla ethel* is a black soil used for making pottery. *Pāni māti* is marshy land; *pali māti* is river silt; *pānk māti* is ditch mud; *khat māti* is earth from near the ryot's house where cow-dung, ashes and house-sweepings are deposited.*

PRINCIPAL CROPS.

The following table shows the normal areas under the principal crops and the percentage of those areas on the normal net cropped area of the district, according to statistics compiled by the Agricultural Department:—

Name of crop.	Normal acreage.	Percentage on normal net cropped area.	Name of crop.	Normal acreage.	Percentage on normal net cropped area.
	ACS.			ACS.	
Winter rice	1,406,000	70	Summer rice	6,000	...
Sugarcane	20,300	1	Wheat	2,600	...
			Barley	1,200	...
Total, *Aghani* crops ...	1,426,300	71	Gram	2,500	...
Autumn rice	106,600	5	Other *rabi* cereals and pulses.	161,000	8
Bājrā	6,100	...	Other *rabi* food-crops ...	47,300	2
Maruā	2,000	...	Linseed	15,000	1
Indian-corn	21,300	1	Rape and mustard	31,000	2
Other *bhādoi* cereals and pulses.	48,600	2	*Til* (*rabi*)	20,500	1
Other *bhādoi* food-crops ...	23,000	1	Other oil-seeds	14,500	1
Jute	11,500	1	Tobacco	3,900	...
Til (*bhādoi*)	10,800	1	Late cotton	2,200	...
Early cotton	1,900	...	Other *rabi* non-food crops	52,400	3
Other *bhādoi* non-food crops.	54,200	3	Total, *Rabi* crops ...	360,100	18
Total, *Bhādoi* crops ..	286,000	14	Total cropped area ...	2,072,400	103
			Orchards and garden produce.	20,200	1
			Twice cropped area	73,000	4

Rice.

From the preceding table it will be apparent that the staple crop of the district is rice, and that the principal harvest is that of the winter crop called *haimantik* or *āman*. This is sown in the

* D. N. Mukharji, *Note on the Soils of Bengal*, 1909.

months of June, July and August, and is reaped in November, December and January. In the most highly cultivated parts the seed is first sown in nurseries and afterwards transplanted into moist fields especially prepared for it, but the greater portion is sown broadcast. The *āus*, or autumn, rice is sown broadcast on dry land in the months of April, May and June, and is reaped in August and September. *Boro*, or summer, rice is sown broadcast in October and November, and is cut in March and April; it usually requires irrigation.

Amlā is the name of another variety of rice sown in June and July and cut in September and October. There are three other kinds of rice called *kākri*, *jhānji* and *nuān*, all of which are sown on high lands in May and June and are reaped after the close of the rains. In the marshes a description of paddy called *kānkri* grows to a height of 4¼ to 4½ feet. The depth of water required for this paddy is from 2 to 2½ feet in all stages of its growth. Another variety, which is called *pankai*, attains a height of from 3 to 4 feet, and requires a depth of water varying from 4 to 6 inches when it is transplanted, and from a foot to 1½ feet when it is fully grown. Land on which winter rice is grown seldom yields a second crop, but wheat, barley, peas and linseed are grown on land from which an early rice crop has been taken.

Other cereals and pulses. Practically the only other cereals grown in the district are wheat and barley, which are raised in very small quantities, and maize, which is grown to a greater extent, especially in the west.

Peas, *birhi* (Phaseolus mungo), *chola* or gram, *mung* (Phaseolus radiatus), the common lentil called *masuri*, *arhar* (Cytisus cajan) and *khesāri* (Lathyrus sativus) are the principal varieties of pulses grown in the district.

Oil-seeds. Mustard and rape, sesamum or *til*, linseed and *sargonja* are the chief varieties of oil-seeds. Two kinds of mustard and rape are grown in this district, viz., *kajli* and *madhubani* or *rai*. The former is a small plant with black seeds giving the best yield. The *madhubani* plants are of medium size, with white seeds, and have the smallest yield. The four varieties of *til* grown in this district are as follows:—(1) *Krishna til*, *i.e.*, black *til*, and (2) *Sanki*, or white, *til*, both of which are sown in jungle land in June and July, and gathered in November and December. (3) *Khasla til* is sown in sugarcane fields in March and April, and cut in June. (4) *Bhādo til* is sown on jungle land in May and June and cut in August and September.

Fibres. The fibre crops of the district consist of jute and hemp (*san*) sown on high land in May and June and cut in August and September.

Sugarcane is grown in moist lands and on river banks, and is chiefly cultivated in the Ghātāl subdivision and in the Sābang thāna of the head-quarters subdivision. Other crops.

Tobacco, turmeric and market garden produce are raised in small quantities on homestead land. The cultivation of indigo was formerly carried on, chiefly by Messrs. Watson & Co., the plant being grown on high lands on the banks of rivers. The price of the dye has fallen so low that it no longer pays to cultivate it.

Miscellaneous products. *Pān.*

Pān or betel-leaf is grown on black clayish soil in gardens called *baraj*. A plot of land situated on high well-drained ground, and close to a pond or *khāl*, is selected for the garden. The land is turned over thoroughly to a depth of 18 inches, trenches are dug around the plot, and the earth dug up from them is spread over it; a roof is made of bamboos and jute stalks supported on bamboo posts, and the four sides of the *baraj* are then enclosed by *tattis* made of the same material as the roof. Bamboo uprights are placed in parallel lines within the garden, and *pān* cuttings are planted between them. When the plants grow, they are trained over the uprights. Sowing generally takes place in June, and the leaves are plucked in July and August of the following year.

Mulberry.

Mulberry is grown to some extent, more particularly in the Ghātāl and Tamlūk subdivisions. For the purpose of planting mulberry cuttings, the land is dug to a depth of about 18 inches with the *kodāli*. The large clods are broken up, after which the field is ploughed twice and levelled. When the land has been well prepared, holes are made 18 inches apart, in each of which one to three cuttings are placed. They are then covered with earth and watered from a *kalsi*, the waterings being repeated until the cuttings take root. When the plants are about 18 inches high, the whole field is flooded, and after a week the earth that was raised in making the holes is spread round the plants. Mulberry is planted in September and October, and the leaves are gathered in May and June.

ROTATION OF CROPS.

The cultivators do not follow any regular system of rotation of crops. In the case of *kāla*, or twice-cropped, land, after the *āus*, or autumn, rice has been harvested, a second crop of pulses or oil-seeds is cultivated in the cold weather. Sugarcane is a special crop requiring a full year to ripen and is grown only at intervals of three or four years.

MANURES.

The canal-irrigated and flooded tracts do not require manure, as the silt brought down by the water fertilizes the soil. Elsewhere manure is in general use for preventing the exhaustion of

the land. The manures generally used are cow-dung and pond-mud, and sometimes ashes. Every ryot has his dung heap close to the cowshed, a piece of low ground being selected, or a hole made, for the collection of dung, ashes, waste straw, vegetable refuse—in fact, everything that in the opinion of the ryot has the least manurial value. Cow-dung is collected in the dung heap from June to March. In April and May it is carried to the field either in carts or on pack-bullocks, and sometimes in bags or baskets. It is first put in heaps at regular intervals and is then spread over the fields either by hand or by means of the *kodāli*.

Pond-mud is considered a very valuable manure, and is most commonly applied to sugarcane, betel and mulberry. To obtain the best results it is necessary to apply it in very large quantities. A good dressing would be forty cart-loads per *bighā*. The beneficial effects of pond-mud last for three years and manifest themselves most in the second year. Pond-mud is most extensively applied in a year of drought when the ponds dry up. Ashes are also sometimes used as manure in this district. They are generally mixed with cow-dung, but are occasionally used alone for onion fields and nurseries.

EXTENSION OF CULTIVATION. In 1874 it was estimated that the area of rice-growing lands had increased by about 50 per cent. during the previous twenty years. There is little doubt that since then there has been a further large increase; but most of the district being permanently-settled, accurate data of the extension of cultivation do not exist. It is, however, known that a considerable area has been reclaimed from jungle in the north and west during the last thirty years, while the *jalpai* lands, *i.e.*, lands which formerly supplied fuel for the manufacture of salt, have been brought under the plough in the south. In the alluvial tract there is but little space for further extension of cultivation; only a few patches of waste land are met with here and there, and the lands under cultivation are not allowed to lie fallow for any long period. In the south there are some waste sandy lands, and in the north and west there is a considerable area not yet brought under the plough. Much of the latter is covered with scrub jungle, but some of it is well suited for cultivation, and the work of reclamation is in progress. The statistics for 1907-08 show that the net cropped area was 1,914,300 acres, while culturable waste accounted for 439,020 acres, and the area not available for cultivation was 965,720 acres.

CATTLE. The cattle of the district are of the degenerate species usually met with in the plains of Bengal, and it is to be feared that there is little chance of any general improvement because the pasture

lands in the alluvial tract are being encroached upon with the extension of cultivation, and also, it may be, because the practice of dedicating Brāhmanī bulls and turning them loose is growing less common. Owing to the shrinkage of pasture lands, cattle are now grazed in the fallow fields, on the slopes of embankments, and on any waste lands there may be. Bullocks while employed on work are fed on straw, oil-cake, etc., but it is evident that a great many do not get sufficient food in the dry months of the year.

Attempts have been made at the head-quarters station, with some success, to improve the local breed of cattle by importing cows from Bihār and bulls from Hissar. Buffaloes are common in the south of the district, where there were formerly wild animals of this species; they are mostly kept for milk. Many villages contain a few sheep, while goats are found almost everywhere. There are few ponies, and such as there are, are of the diminutive kind common in Bengal.

CHAPTER VI.

NATURAL CALAMITIES.

FAMINES. THE district is not specially liable to famines. Droughts are not of frequent occurrence, nor, when they do take place, are they usually of so severe a character as to cause a general destruction of the crops. Much depends on the quantity and distribution of the rainfall and the situation of the lands under cultivation. Part of the district being high and undulating, and part flat and low-lying, most estates are liable to suffer to some extent from the vicissitudes of the seasons. If the monsoon sets in early with very heavy rain, the crops on the lower lands cannot be grown at all or are damaged by submersion, while, if it sets in late or ceases prematurely, the crops on the high sites suffer from drought. When, however, the rain falls in moderate quantity throughout the season, the crops of all parts are good and an abundant harvest is the result.

There have been five famines or periods of scarcity during the time of British administration, viz., in 1766, 1792, 1851, 1866 and 1897. Of the first three there is little record; in 1851 there was a loss of nearly five-eighths of the rice harvest, which is the main crop of the district. The worst famine, of which there is detailed information, was that of 1866, the great Orissa famine, from which Midnapore suffered more than any district in Bengal outside Orissa.

Famine of 1866. In 1864 a large area had been desolated by a cyclone and storm-wave, which will be described later in this chapter. Nearly three-fourths of the population of the Doro and Gumgarh *parganas* had been swept away. In September 1864 it was reported that a fourth of the former *pargana* was lying waste for want of men to cultivate it, while in Hijilī, which had suffered most severely from the cyclone, the ryots were suffering from want of grain. The rains of 1865 ceased unusually early, no rainfall of any consequence occurring later than the 15th September; and as time wore on, and the drought still continued, the aspect of affairs became very grave. On the 13th October it was reported that in Hijilī one-fourth of the rice crop had already perished, and

that if no rain fell soon, there would be a famine, "the like of which had not been seen or heard of for many years." It was not that rice was absolutely wanting, for large quantities were being imported from the Balasore district, and it was also being brought in to Hijilī from the central parts of Midnapore. But the price, which ranged from 12 to 16 seers per rupee, was quite beyond the means of the poorer classes in this part of the district.

In December a certain amount of relief was obtained from the harvesting of the rice crop, but this had been reduced by the drought to only half the average. Prices soon rapidly rose again, distress deepened, and there was a serious outbreak of violent crime caused by want. In April, the old and infirm were beginning to die from insufficient food, and relief works became necessary. By the end of June, 18 relief depôts had been opened, but, in spite of this, deaths from starvation were occurring, particularly in the neighbourhood of Dāntan and in the jungle tracts. At the beginning of July 1866, rice sold in Midnapore town at 6½ seers for the rupee; and in the Jungle Mahāls, though it sold nominally at 7 seers per rupee, it was not procurable in many places, and the police frequently reported that they could not obtain enough for even their own use. The general opinion at this time seems to have been that there was plenty of grain in the district, but that the *mahājans*, or rice merchants, would not part with it except at exorbitant prices. Whether this was really the case or not, it became clear that importation of rice on a considerable scale must be undertaken if the depôts already established were to be kept at work.

The famine reached its height in the months of August and September. The Board of Revenue, despite its previous resolution not to import food, was now forced to take action and despatched a steamer to Rangoon for rice to the value of Rs. 30,000. By the 1st October the rice was being imported into Midnapore, and the stock thus received was considered to be more than sufficient to last out the famine. From the beginning of October the distress began to abate rapidly with the promise of an abundant harvest. When the crop came in, there was cheapness and plenty, and relief operations were brought to a close by the end of November. No accurate statistics of the mortality are available, but the Collector estimated that in the western part of the district from ten to fifteen per cent. of the population died of starvation and diseases induced by it, and that in the central portion and the Contai subdivision from two to three per cent., and in Tamlūk a half per cent. perished.

The total number of relief centres and sub-depôts established from first to last was twenty-three. The first was opened at Gopīballabhpur on the 19th May; the last was opened at Jāmbani on the 26th August. Besides those on works, the number of paupers relieved daily from June to November averaged 5,780. The funds raised for the relief of distress consisted of Rs. 77,350 contributed by the Board of Revenue and the Calcutta Famine Relief Committee, and Rs. 23,735 obtained from subscriptions. Besides this, 10,469 cwt. of rice were supplied to the district at a cost of Rs. 53,034, which, deducting the sum of Rs. 7,114 realized from sales of rice, gives a total of Rs. 1,47,004 spent in affording relief to the starving population. This, however, is exclusive of money expended on public works for the purpose of providing labour for the poor. The sum of Rs. 73,736 was placed at the disposal of the Magistrate for the employment of labour on works, of which Rs. 43,128 were expended up to the end of November 1866. Also Rs. 1,68,195 were placed at the disposal of the officers of the Public Works Department for ordinary and special works, of which Rs. 1,04,596 were returned as expended.

The Famine Commissioners summed up the results of their inquiry into the distress in Midnapore in the following words:— "It is clear that the nature and degree of the distress were not known, and operations were not commenced sufficiently early. Comparatively large as was the relief at last afforded, the Collector does not think that at best it reached half the starving population, and there was unhappily a large mortality estimated about 50,000, or about one-tenth of the whole population of the tracts seriously afflicted. But in some of the more remote parts the mortality was, it is to be feared, larger than this proportion. Mr. Terry's statement seems to show that in some parts the labouring population died in larger proportion; and it is stated that in one jungly tract the population of stone-masons and iron-smelters almost entirely disappeared. Late in the season rice was imported by the Board of Revenue, but it was too late."

Famine of 1897.

In the famine of 1897 only a small tract was affected, viz., a portion of the Binpur thāna, about 100 square miles in area, with a population of 25,000, situated between 30 and 40 miles west of Midnapore station. This part of the country is hilly and jungly, and is inhabited mostly by Santāls. Here the beggar class and the dependants of labourers were in a state of destitution for several months rendering gratuitous relief necessary. It was not found necessary to organize relief works properly so called, but work was afforded to able-bodied labourers on six district

roads in or near the tract affected. Gratuitous relief to the amount of Rs. 1,289 was distributed. It was administered by officers in charge of the five relief circles into which the tract was divided. The daily average for eight weeks of persons in receipt of relief was 1,216 or 4·86 of the total population of the affected tract.

FLOODS.

The district is particularly liable to floods from the streams and rivers, which flow down from the hills of the neighbouring districts. If there is a very heavy fall of rain on these hills, the rivers overflow the embankments and cause considerable loss of property. The mouths of the rivers, moreover, are insufficient to discharge the excess water, and consequently many miles of country remain submerged for weeks after a flood.

The records of the district show that disastrous floods frequently swept across large areas during the first half of the nineteenth century. In May 1823 a flood destroyed the whole line of embankments, and the water rose so high that it entered the Collector's Court at Contai and washed away the records. The sea water afterwards found its way through the broken dykes and seriously injured the arable land. A second flood occurred in 1831, when the embankments were again washed away, and the rice, which was well advanced, was almost totally destroyed. A full enquiry into the losses sustained was made by Mr. Collector Wyatt, and the Government, in consequence, granted remissions of revenue to the extent of Rs. 85,678. In October of the following year a second destructive flood occurred, which did great damage to the ripening crops and overtopped embankments 15 feet in height. An investigation into the losses sustained by the cultivators made it necessary for Government to allow further remissions of revenue to the extent of Rs. 84,691. A still more serious flood in May 1833 entirely destroyed what remained of the embankments. A fourth great inundation—the fourth in the space of three years—followed in September 1834, during which more than half the crops were swept away, 7,112 persons or half the population of the flooded tract were drowned, and 865 villages inundated. A careful investigation resulted in Government granting the sufferers remissions of revenue amounting to Rs. 6,28,789 and suspensions to the extent of Rs. 4,97,732. A letter from the Board of Revenue to Government, dated the 9th May 1837, declared that—"These calamities were of no light or common kind, and their consequences were of no transient or temporary character. The argiculturists had not to suffer merely the occasional losses of an unprosperous season and a bad harvest, to be repaid by succeeding years of fertility and abundance. They

were overwhelmed in two successive years by tremendous visitations of Providence. By the first of these, more than half of the crops were swept away, more than half the population was destroyed, and the fertility of the soil was almost annihilated. Yet this was not the whole calamity. Hardly had a year elapsed before a second destruction took place."

Other floods occurred in January 1839 and May 1840, in the latter of which, although the sea embankments stood very well, the country suffered by the bursting of the land embankments. No remissions or suspensions of revenue, however, were considered necessary. Again, in August 1845, floods did severe damage to the Kalmijol and Midnapore Embankments; the *parganas* of Maināchaurā, Sābang and Kāsijorā were inundated, and the rice crop injured. In October 1848, a flood did much damage to the embankments, which were overtopped and breached in many places. The crops also suffered and, after an investigation by the Collector, remissions were granted to the extent of Rs. 10,818, and suspensions to the extent of Rs. 1,42,797. In April 1850, another inundation overtopped and breached the embankments in the sea-board *parganas*, and along the banks of the large rivers. Fortunately, no crops were on the ground, except indigo, and no remissions or suspensions of revenue were considered necessary.

Floods of 1888.

Among more recent floods those of 1888 may be especially mentioned both on account of their widespread extent and also because they led to the appointment of a special Committee to enquire into the origin of floods in Midnapore with a view to the adoption of remedial measures: this enquiry will be referred to in the next chapter.

The floods of 1888, which were due to abnormal rainfall, inundated the greater portion of the low-lying lands in the district. To the extreme north, the Ghātāl subdivision suffered from a simultaneous rise of the Kāsai, Silai, and Dwārakeswar rivers. In the Midnapore subdivision almost the whole country was submerged owing to a flood in the Kāliāghai river, which was the highest on record. Parts of the Tamlūk subdivision also suffered severely, and the central part of the Contai subdivision was under water till the end of December. The damage was, however, compensated by a bumper crop of *boro* paddy, which was grown more widely than usual. Eventually, the only relief measure which it was found necessary to undertake was the gratuitous distribution of food to some destitute persons in the Contai subdivision, who in ordinary years would have subsisted on their neighbours' charity.

Being situated at the north-west angle of the Bay of Bengal the district is liable to cyclonic storms, which are often accompanied by heavy rainfall and sometimes by storm-waves. Storms, all causing more or less damage to life and property, are reported to have occurred in 1831, 1832, 1833, 1840, 1848, 1850, 1851, 1876, 1885, and 1901, but none of these are comparable to the cyclones of 1864, 1867 and 1874. **CYCLONES.**

The cyclone of 1864 burst on the 5th October and was of unprecedented violence. It had its origin in the vicinity of the Andaman Islands, and, travelling northwards and westwards, first struck Bengal on the Balasore and Midnapore coast. In the southern and eastern parts of this district, lying on the sea board, and exposed to the full force of the storm-wave, the effect was most disastrous. Colonel Short, in a report on Southern Hijilī, stated:—"The fury of the cyclone caused a fearful destruction in the villages to the interior; indeed, the raised plateaux on which many stood were swept clean. It appears that the people, believing the lull in the storm to be the sign of its having passed over, proceeded to bring in their cattle, and whilst so engaged they were overtaken by the waters, which, topping the lowest part of the dyke or entering through the breaches, drowned man and beast; while many, standing on the high ridges separating the fields, were, during the height of the cyclone, literally swept into the water and drowned." **Cyclone of 1864.**

The height of the storm-wave varied. On the southern coast it nowhere attained any extraordinary height, and it did not to any appreciable extent breach the sea face of the great dyke of Hijilī. The wide mouth of the Rasūlpur river, however, was afforded an entrance to the water, and, although its principal creeks are all embanked, a large area behind Contai was flooded. As the wave was forced up the narrowing estuary of the Hooghly, its height and force increased. At Cowcolly the wave came in two hours before high tide, and rose 16·48 feet above high-spring level, and 6 feet 4 inches above the top of the embankment, sweeping over the country within, and carrying away everything in its path. Higher up the river, at the mouth of the Haldi, the height of the wave was 10 feet above spring-tide level, and it overtopped the embankment for several feet along a length of 18 miles. At Tamlūk, the water poured in irresistible volume over the embankment, which it topped to a depth of 8½ feet, sweeping away a row of masonry houses inside, and scooping out the foundations. At exposed points, the first intimation the people had of the inundation was their being carried away by the wave. At Kolā Ghāt, it entered the Kolā Khāl in a vast mass,

sweeping along parallel to the metalled road, and topping it for several miles up. The height of the inundation decreased gradually towards the interior, and the flood did not extend beyond Siddhā, an inland village of *pargana* Kāsijorā. From the mouth of the Rūpnārāyan, the inundation was more extensive and generally more severe, as the waters from the estuary of the Hooghly swept over the low-lying promontory of Doro Dumnān and Mahishādal, and up the wide channels of the Haldi and Rasūlpur rivers.

The loss of life and property was very great. In the low-lying lands of Gumgarh, for example, it was estimated at three-fourths of the total population. In Bāhirimuthā, terrible destruction spread over an area of 56 square miles, the devastation being greater here than elsewhere, as the villages were larger, more numerous, and more thickly populated. Excluding tracts from which no returns of loss of life were received, the ascertained deaths caused by the cyclone in this district were 33,000. The number drowned or killed in the storm, however, by no means represented the total loss of life caused by the cyclone. The immediate losses were equalled, if not exceeded, by the deaths caused by the famine and the pestilence, cholera, dysentery and small-pox which succeeded the inundation. The prompt steps taken by Government and its local officers, the Calcutta public, and many private persons, in sending supplies of food and clothing, alleviated the pressure of famine after a few days. But putrid vegetation and unburied bodies and carcases for many weeks lay strewn over the country, and the consumption of bad food and impure water were evils less easy to deal with, especially as the prejudices of the Hindu population against touching a dead body were so strong as to be proof even against the dictates of self-preservation.

These fertile causes of disease acted on a people already suffering severe mental prostration from the loss of their relations and property, and proved more fatal than the deluge which had first overwhelmed them. Mr. Montresor, the Commissioner of the Division, reported that "almost entire villages have been depopulated from those awful scourges, cholera and small-pox." The Superintendent of Kaukhali (Cowcolly) lighthouse, in a letter dated 7th December, stated that "the unfortunate inhabitants are dying by scores every day, from a disease very similar to cholera brought on by using the water of this place. Every tank, pond and well is stagnant with decaying matter, both animal and vegetable, besides containing a large admixture of salt water. I cannot accurately state the loss of life, but I am afraid the

fatal malady has carried off more than the cyclone. There is utter desolation everywhere. Scarcely a human being is to be seen. The paddy, now ripe, is left in the fields for the cattle to destroy. When I asked any one the reason of this, the answer always was, "Who is to eat it?"

Assuming the mortality by sickness to have been equal to that caused by storm and flood, 66,000 deaths must be attributed to this terrible disaster, exclusive of the tracts not specially reported upon. The loss of crops in the inundated tracts was not so serious as might have been expected. Happily the water drained off from a great portion of the land very quickly, and the deposit of salt did not destroy the rice. The land was soaked with fresh water at the time the storm-wave broke over it, and was therefore less liable to be impregnated by saline deposits than it would have been during the dry season. It was officially stated that, had the cyclone occurred in March or April, the productive powers of the land would have been destroyed for the next three years. Even as it was, in parts where the water did not at once drain off, the crops were greatly injured, one-fourth in the district as a whole being destroyed. The loss of private property, in the shape of cattle and houses, was very severe. The loss of cattle is estimated to have been three or four times that of human life. With regard to houses, it is reported that in Tamlūk, out of 1,400, only 27 remained standing after the storm. This locality lay in the centre of the cyclone, and had to endure the climax of the gale. At many other places, however, an equal proportion of houses was destroyed. Government also suffered serious loss by damage to the embankments, by numerous large salt stores being blown down, and their contents washed away, by the destruction of public buildings, and lastly, by the remissions of revenue which it was necessary to make to the landholders in the inundated tracts. The north and west of the district were not much affected by the cyclone, and its effects were hardly felt west of Midnapore town.

Cyclone of 1867. The violent cyclone which occurred on 15th-16th October 1867 selected this district as one of the principal scenes of its devastation. A storm-wave came ashore not far from Contai, and the storm travelled with the usual rotatory motion from south-west to north-east across the district. The diameter of the storm was about 20 miles, and the whole country coming under its influence was wrecked, its intensity in this area exceeding that of the cyclone of 1864. The station of Midnapore was severely damaged, and the loss of life in the town was great. In the whole district the deaths amounted to 3,049, while 17,500

cattle perished. From Midnapore the storm passed over Ghātāl and Arambāgh to Burdwān.

Cyclone of 1874.

After this there was a respite up to 1874. In the meantime, not only had the sea-dyke been completed, but all the great *khāls* leading into it had been sluiced. Were it not that, unfortunately, the Pichābani sluice was at the time under repair and a side channel consequently left open, the whole line from Birkul to the mouth of the Rasūlpur would have been completely guarded. In this cyclone the violence of the wind undoubtedly surpassed that of 1864. The two-storied house at Contai was wrecked, and a storm-wave, apparently higher than that of 1864, burst with full violence nearly on the centre of the sea-dyke. The state of the dyke afterwards showed that it must have been overtopped by the wash of the tide, and the sea must have stood for some time 1·5 feet below crest level; but both the sluices of the dyke and the dyke itself escaped with trifling injury. Thus, the wave rose 13·5 feet over high-spring flood level or 2 feet higher than in 1864; and the mere fact of keeping out such a storm-wave would have been an engineering triumph had it not been for the open Pichābani Khāl with its side embankments of only the old level. Up this opening the wave travelled with terrible effect. It both breached and overtopped the low section embankments and, taking the sea-dyke in flank and rear, inundated a large portion of the country which that work had protected in front. The storm fortunately spent its violence to the west of the Hooghly, and no wave of any dimensions went up that river or its tributaries. Some damage was done to the country east of the Rasūlpur, but the injury from salt water was not to be compared with that caused in 1864.

CHAPTER VII.

CANALS, DRAINAGE AND EMBANKMENTS.

THE canals of the district are (1) the Midnapore canal, which takes off from the river Kāsai near the town of Midnapore, and extends eastward to the Hooghly at Uluberiā; (2) the Hijilī tidal canal extending from the Hooghly at Geonkhāli to the Rasūlpur river; and (3) a portion of the Orissa coast canal extending from the Hijilī tidal canal into Balasore. The first is used both for navigation and irrigation, and the other two, which are connected by the canalized Sarpai river, for navigation only. CANALS.

The construction of the Midnapore canal was begun by the East India Irrigation and Canal Company in 1866; the works were taken over by Government two years later, and irrigation commenced in 1871. The canal originally formed part of the Orissa canal scheme, *i.e.*, it was intended to have a high level canal providing a navigable trade route between Cuttack and Calcutta; but the Midnapore canal was at an early stage separated and treated as a distinct project. The water-supply is derived from the Kāsai river at Midnapore, where there is a regulating weir with head-works, and the canal extends to Uluberiā on the Hooghly, crossing the Rūpnārāyan and Dāmodar rivers. Midnapore Canal.

The main canal consists of four sections. The first has its head at Midnapore, where the river Kāsai is spanned by a weir, and terminates in the same river at Pānskura; its length is 25 miles. The second extends from Pānskura, where there is also a weir, to Dainan on the Rūpnārāyan; its length is nearly 12 miles. The third section extends from Kantapukhur on the Rūpnārāyan to Kaltapārā on the Dāmodar river, and the fourth connects the Dāmodar with the Hooghly; but these two last sections are in the Howrah district. The total length of the canal is 49 miles, and of the navigation from Midnapore to the Hooghly, including the intermediate rivers, 53 miles. There is also a branch canal, $16\frac{3}{4}$ miles long, running to near Nārāyangarh on the railway, which was made navigable because it was

originally intended to carry the canal on to Balasore, some 60 miles beyond Nārāyangarh. The total navigable length is thus 69¾ miles; while the distributaries have a total length of 267 miles, the village channels of 30 miles and the drainage channels of 54½ miles.

About seven-eighths of the irrigation from this system is effected from the first section of the canal, viz., from Midnapore to Pānskura on the Kāsai (25 miles), while the second, from Pānskura to Dainan on the Rūpnārāyan, irrigates about 9,000 acres. The greater portion of the country irrigated from the former section is non-deltaic, and there irrigation is highly beneficial in almost all years. The country below Pānskura is chiefly deltaic, the lands are often water-logged, and it is only in dry years that irrigation is required. As regards the benefit obtained by the use of the canal water, even in years of sufficient and well distributed rainfall, the yield is higher than that from fields which are not so irrigated, and the cost of cultivation in canal-irrigated lands is less than that of non-irrigated fields. In the first place, less manure is required, and secondly, the expense of weeding is much less. The saving under the second head is considerable, for the canal water destroys weeds rapidly, so that one labourer will be enough for weeding a canal-irrigated field, which, if unirrigated, would have required three men. There is practically no difference in the rates of rent for irrigated and unirrigated lands of the same quality, the cultivators paying the same rate for adjoining areas, even though only one gets canal water.

The irrigation is almost all carried on under a system of long leases (for seven years). The rate for such leases was Re. 1-8 an acre from 1873 till 1905, when it was raised to Rs. 2 an acre, the rate for single waterings being at the same time increased from 8 annas to Re. 1. The autumn and cold weather rice crops occupy almost the whole of the cultivable area commanded by the canal; the little that is under sugarcane or mulberry being usually on high ground above canal level. There is little or no *rabi* irrigation, and, though some spring (*boro*) rice is occasionally grown with the help of canal water when the winter crop has failed, the amount is too variable and, at the best, too small to be taken into account. Thus, the irrigation may be said to be wholly dependent upon the *kharif* demand, and this varies with the rainfall. In years of seasonable rainfall there is a good supply of water in the Kāsai, so that there is not a very large demand for *kharif* irrigation. In years of exceptional drought the demand is limited only by the supply, and the profits are

great; in 1873, for example, the Collector reported that it was a common saying among the cultivators that the profits from the irrigation of a *bighā* of rice would purchase a *bighā* of *lākhirāj*. In very dry years, however, great economy in supplying water has to be practised; for instance, in 1898 and 1907, two exceptionally dry years, some land, which it was most inconvenient to irrigate, had to go without any supply.

There is, moreover, uncertainty in the supply of the river at different times of the year. In consequence of the small size of the catchment area, the supply fails in October when it is most wanted. In the earlier part of the season the rainfall is usually ample, but there is little need of canal water. Thus, in Midnapore, canal irrigation labours under a double disadvantage. In years of heavy rainfall it is little wanted, and in years of extreme drought, when it is of the utmost value, the water-supply partially fails. The Kāsai water is nevertheless much esteemed by the ryots for the large quantity of rich silt which it carries, and this is a powerful recommendation in its favour in all years.

The total cultivable area commanded by the canal in the district is 123,200 acres distributed as follows:—(1) under the Midnapore weir 98,000 acres; and (2) under the Pānskura weir 25,200 acres. The actual area annually irrigable is 71,000 and 9,000 acres respectively, the maximum area irrigable under long leases being fixed at 80,000 acres in 1904. The marginal table gives statistics of the area irrigated, the acreage shown being the annual average in each case. The area has been decreasing since 1903-04 partly owing to an increase of the water-rate from April 1905.

Triennium ending.	Acres.
1901-02	78,190
1904-05	88,944
1907-08	65,783

Before the opening of the Bengal-Nāgpur Railway the canal formed part of the main route between Calcutta and Midnapore, but the railway has diverted the traffic and caused a falling off in the receipts from navigation. With the object of encouraging navigation the rates of toll were reduced by half from June 1906, and the traffic has since increased.

Hijilī Tidal Canal.

The Hijilī tidal canal extends from Geonkhāli near the junction of the Rūpnārāyan and Hooghly rivers to the Haldi river, and thence to the Rasūlpur river at Kālīnagar, a length of 29 miles. It is a tidal canal, with two reaches, each locked at either end. The first range, which takes off from Geonkhāli and terminates at Etamogra on the left bank of the Haldi river, is nearly 11 miles in length. The second range, which is 17 miles

long, connects the Haldi and Rasūlpur rivers, commencing at Terapakhia on the right bank of the former and terminating at Kālīnagar on the left bank of the latter river. There are four locks, viz., Geonkhāli, Etamogra, Terapakhia and Kālīnagar. The canal is used solely for navigation. The traffic fell off considerably after the opening of the railway, and the regular service of steamers had consequently to be stopped, but it is now improving. This canal is used chiefly as a channel by which the southern part of the Midnapore district exports its surplus rice to Calcutta, receiving in return piece-goods, salt, and other imports. This canal was begun in 1868 and completed in 1873.

Orissa Coast Canal.

The Orissa Coast Canal, of which 36 miles (known as Range III) lie in this district, begins at Baitgarh on the right bank of the Rasūlpur river, where it connects with the Hijilī canal, and runs through Balasore, where it terminates on the Matai river. It is practically a continuation of the Hijilī canal, and like it is used only for navigation. Work was begun in 1880, and the canal was opened to traffic in 1886.

DRAINAGE.

A considerable area is water-logged, especially in the east and south of the district. This is largely the result of embankments, constructed along the margin of silt-bearing rivers or tidal estuaries, which have caused an alteration in the comparative levels of the country. These embankments date back many centuries, and appear to have been at first isolated lengths, of no systematic alignment or section, constructed by zamīndārs to protect individual holdings or local depressions. By degrees, certain lengths were connected, and there came to be a regular system of embankments either constructed in lines along one or both sides of a river or forming a "circuit" in the fork between the branches of a river or tidal creek—a "circuit," it may be explained, is an area of cultivated land encircled with embankments to keep out floods. Eventually, more or less continuous lines were taken over by Government, which engaged, on certain conditions, to complete them and maintain them up to a certain standard.

When these embankments were first brought to such a state of efficiency as practically to exclude the flood or tidal water, the drainage of the protected area was easily arranged for by sluices in the embankments at the sides of natural minor drainage lines, as the general level of the land was, of course, the same on both sides of the embankment. With the lapse of time, however, the action of the silt-laden rivers spilling over their banks when in flood, and to a still greater degree the action of the influx and efflux of tidal water also heavily laden with silt, has gradually

but steadily, raised the marginal lands between the embankments and the channels, as well as the beds of the channels themselves, at any rate of those within tidal influence. The original uniformity of level has consequently disappeared, and the protected lands are almost everywhere, though in varying degrees, lower than formerly. The difference of level is now, in some instances so great, that much difficulty is experienced in arranging for their drainage at all.

A further result of embanking both sides of the rivers has been a gradual contraction of the waterway, until, at length, the lower reaches are unable to carry the water brought down in floods from above. This leads to frequent breaches of the embankments and flooding of the country, which is often more serious locally than if there had been no embankment at all. On the other hand, where the embankments have been effective, the country has been deprived of the beneficial action of the silt-laden water, though protected from its temporary and local destructive action. To remedy this state of affairs, various drainage projects have been undertaken in the water-logged areas, such as the cutting of channels, the deepening of rivers and *khāls*, and the provision of sluices in embankments. The drainage of the tract which lies in the Contai subdivision between the Haldi and the Subarnarekhā rivers is a particularly difficult problem. Numerous suggestions have been put forward and opposed, the arguments on either side affording striking illustration of the conflict between the desire to reclaim tidal lands for cultivation and the desire to avoid the injury to drainage channels which the loss of the tidal spill basins, due to reclamation, must inevitably cause.

The most important scheme undertaken during recent years is the drainage of the Argoal circuit, a tract of land, extending over nearly 28 square miles, lying in the fork between the Sadar and Bagda khāls in the Contai subdivision. This area is enclosed by an embankment, the lands outside which have been raised by deposits of silts to a much higher level than the interior lands. The lower lands are water-logged even in ordinary years, and when the embankment breaches, as it does occasionally, the enclosed lands are devastated and the homesteads flooded. A scheme for the drainage of this tract, at an estimated cost of Rs. 1,58,000, was therefore prepared, the arrangement being that the cost should be advanced by Government and then apportioned between it and the zamīndārs benefited by the work. It has now been practically completed and will, it is hoped, improve materially the conditions of this water-logged tract.

Drainage Committee's enquiry.

In 1889 a special Committee was appointed to enquire into the drainage of the area affected by the Hijilī tidal and Orissa coast canals and other flooded tracts in the Jalamutha, Majnamutha and Burdwān estates—all included in the country within the basins of the Rasūlpur and Haldi rivers and their affluents. The Committee found that inundation was due to four distinct causes, viz., (1) incursions of the sea, (2) the overflow of the Subarnarekhā, (3) the high floods of the Kāliāghai river and the breaching of the Amarsi embankment, and (4) the accumulation of water over the country owing to excessive rainfall. Remedial measures had been undertaken, or proposed, for the first three. As regards the fourth, with which the Committee were required to deal, they were of opinion that the cause of accumulation was undoubtedly the silted state of the river Rasūlpur and the obstructed state of the drainage channels leading into it, *i.e.*, the Bagda river and the Sardar, or Maidakhāli, Khāl. These streams are the natural main drainage outlets of the country to the west and north-west of Kālīnagar, an area of some 280 square miles; but unfortunately for their efficiency as drainage channels, they had rapidly silted up owing to the reclamation of what are known as the *jalpai* lands, which had been going on for the last twenty years.

The *jalpai* lands, it may be explained, were lands which, being exposed to the overflow of tidal water, were strongly impregnated with saline matter. The manufacture of salt being a Government monopoly, they were long held under the direct management of Government for the supply of fuel and the manufacture of salt. After the abolition of the monopoly, they were gradually reclaimed and brought under cultivation, embankments being built in order to exclude salt water from them. The result was a rapid deterioration of the drainage channels. Formerly, when no obstruction of the flood tide existed, the silt-laden water of the Rasūlpur, finding its way up at high tide, spread over the *jalpai* lands, which, being covered with jungle, were calculated to facilitate such a deposit. When, however, the lands were embanked, the silt-laden water was forced into the drainage channels, which, having no fresh water streams discharging into them, quickly silted up. The resultant state of things may be realized from a resolution of the Public Works Department, dated 6th December 1888, in which the tracts round Contai and Tamlūk were described as follows:—"The drainage is blocked over some three or four hundred square miles, and crops injured or destroyed over about one hundred square miles. The causes of the obstruction were examined by Mr. Vertannes last year, and shown to be

of comparatively recent origin. It was shown that the silting of the tidal creeks—notably the Bagda and Maidakhāli Khāls, which unite to form the Rasūlpur river at Kālīnagar—was due to the excessive land reclamations which have been carried out during the last fifteen years. These creeks for seven or eight months of the year discharge little or no natural drainage ; but so long as the low country lying about them was, comparatively speaking, unembanked, the flood tides swept freely over it ; while, with the turn of the ebb, these accumulated waters were poured back into the channels with redoubled force, and so scoured them out. By this simple process the creeks were maintained by nature in an efficient state to discharge the drainage of the monsoon. During recent years, however, the large tidal basin has been embanked and reclaimed. The consequence is that the tidal waves are headed back by the embankment, and deposit their silt in the bed of the creeks, which are rapidly rising above the level of the country which they formerly drained. Thus, after heavy rainfall, not only is the whole of the reclaimed country thrown out of cultivation, but the drainage of the more inland tracts is blocked, and their crops also are damaged and destroyed."

The Committee found that the other chief cause of obstructed drainage was the construction of cross-dams in the main drainage channels for the purpose of excluding salt water from the lands above them. The danger of these cross-dams arises from the fact that they cause a deposit of silt at or near them. As one cross-dam is built below another, the silt gradually raises the bed of the stream, and consequently affects the level at which water flows off throughout the whole country served by the channel. The danger is intensified when embankments are also constructed along the margin of the channel and the area of the channel is contracted. Every condition thus exists for favouring the rapid silting up of the bed and blocking the drainage of the country above.

As regards this latter conclusion, Colonel J. M. McNeile, Chief Engineer of Bengal, wrote in 1890 :—" Such cross-dams were only possible in the main drainage channels, when they had already silted up to a considerable extent. The embankments, in one form or another, are responsible for the whole difficulty in which we are placed. The old, inner, and now abandoned embankments were constructed to reclaim salt swamps, and immediately on their construction, silting was arrested on the reclaimed lands and accelerated outside. In the first instance the areas excluded were large, and though they were gradually

being raised, the body of tidal water returning off them to the main drainage channels or rivers was sufficient to keep both minor and major channels clear, though frequently some silt-clearing was required outside the sluices. Still there was sufficient fall for the water, and drainage was possible. When the *jalpai* lands were further reclaimed by putting embankments close to the main channel banks, the body of tidal water passing up these channels was much reduced, and in receding had not power to clear out the silt from the beds of the channels, the consequence being the much more rapid silting of the smaller area left under tidal influence and of the main channels themselves."

The remedial measures proposed by the Committee were:—(1) That cross-dams in the main arterial drainage channels should be removed, and the reconstruction of them should not be allowed, save where they were really required in order to protect cultivated land in the neighbourhood of those channels from inundation by salt water; (2) that the construction of embankments in *jalpai* lands should be stopped, and, if possible, orders should be given for the removal of such embankments already constructed as interfered with the afflux of the tide over what was considered to be the necessary spill area; (3) that the Public Works Department should take charge of all the main arterial drainage channels and that they should be kept up at the expense of the zamīndārs and ryots concerned in the manner provided in Act II of 1882; (4) that certain obstructions to drainage caused by the Hijilī tidal canal should be removed; (5) that certain engineering works should be taken up for the drainage of particular tracts.

The report of the Committee was reviewed in a Resolution of Government, dated 18th July 1890, in which it was stated:—"The report of the Committee indicates that severe floods, causing the greatest injury to crops, occurred in 1823, 1831, 1832, 1833, 1848 and 1850, a fact which indicates an original deficiency in the natural drainage of these basins, antecedent to the action taken within the last forty years. During that period Government has spent half a million sterling on embankments in Midnapore, four times as much as all the other landlords of that district. Moreover, a sea-dyke has been recently constructed in connection with the tidal canal, which has, according to the Committee, conferred enormous benefits on the landlords and tenants by protecting their lands from the numerous inundations of the sea to which they were formerly exposed. It is desirable, in considering the general bearing

of the report, to bear these facts in mind, as the Committee necessarily dwell mainly on the defects in the action of Government, giving less prominence to the natural agencies which produce flood in Midnapore and to the success with which in many places these have been counteracted."

In regard to the question of the effect of reclaiming the *jalpai* lands, it was said:—"It appears that both the engineer officers and the natives of the district attach more importance to the effect of embanking the *jalpai* lands than the Committee quite endorse; but in the face of the facts and arguments adduced by the Executive Engineer, the Lieutenant-Governor cannot but accept the conclusion that embankments are primarily responsible for the entire difficulty. Cross-dams have doubtless done much harm and accelerated the deterioration of the drainage channels, but, until the main drainage channels had been very considerably silted up, cross-dams in them would not have been possible. It appears to be impossible to consider any portion, or even the whole, of the *jalpai* lands, 'as sufficient spill area,' at least as a permanent remedy for the existing evil, inasmuch as these lands are already much silted up and are already considerably higher than the protected lands which have to be drained; but, as a remedial measure, the re-opening of these lands to tidal spill, and the absolute prohibition of any new embankment within their limits, will no doubt for a time put a check on the present rapidly increasing obstruction to the drainage of the country. From this point of view His Honour accepts the conclusions arrived at, and the Board will be requested to make the necessary arrangements as soon as possible in communication with the Public Works Department of this Government."

As regards the cross-dams, it was said:—"No cross-dams should be allowed except temporary dams put by the Engineer in charge to allow of silt clearance above them, and the officer putting up such dam should be responsible for its complete removal at the earliest possible opportunity. All existing cross-dams, whether in major or minor drainage lines, should be removed. Hussea bunds* are almost equally objectionable as contracting the area over which the tidal water can spill, and even though the plea be to keep the tide off otherwise culturable land, no increase in their existing number or section should be permitted." With reference to the proposal to place the larger drainage channels under the control of the Public Works Department, it was

* The meaning of this term is explained later in the section dealing with the terminology of embankments.

pointed out that under the Embankment Act the Collector has a discretion in the initiation of proceedings to this effect.

EMBANKMENTS. In Midnapore, embankments on an extensive scale are required for protecting the coast line from the invasion of the sea, for preventing the inrush of salt water from tidal creeks, and for avoiding the submersion of low lands by the rivers overflowing their banks. The rivers, after leaving the higher lands and entering the alluvial soil, cease to serve as drainage channels, for their banks rise more and more above the cultivated plains the further they get from the hilly ground. In most cases, the river, having ceased to be a drainage channel, diminishes in volume as it approaches its mouth, while its bed rises in elevation. Embankments thus become, at any rate within the tidal area, an absolute necessity for the protection of the lands in the interior, which slope away from the rivers and form saucer-shaped hollows between them. The danger of salt water inundations is even greater than that of fresh water floods: it is said, for instance, in Hijilī that a single overflow of salt water is fatal to three years' crops. Hence, in the littoral portion of the district it is not any sudden rush of water, as in the case of the Kāsai, or any occasional inundations, but the ordinary gradual rise of each day's tides that has to be entirely excluded from all land set apart from agriculture. Briefly, it may be stated that, as in Holland, so in Midnapore, a great portion of the area is only rendered habitable by the sea-dyke and the subordinate embankments which run along the tidal *khāls*. "Great as the cost of these works has been, and as their maintenance is, it bears no proportion to the agricultural wealth or to the quantity of human and animal life which they protect from constantly recurring ruin."*

Terminology. The system of embankments and subsidiary works necessitated by the conditions above described go by the generic name of *pulbāndhi*, which may be defined as the whole system of works necessary for the protection of agriculture in a country exposed to inundation. Various other terms are used for the different parts of this system (now simplified though not entirely superseded by the construction of sluices), which it will be convenient to mention before proceeding to the history of the embankments.

Ganguria bāndh and *bāhar-bhera bāndh* are names given to the largest and most important embankments along the sea coast or along the tidal rivers and estuaries. These embankments have to be supplemented by others, for it is evident that the salt water of each tide would gain an entrance inland unless the

* H. L. Harrison, *Bengal Embankment Manual*, 1875.

outer, or *ganguria*, embankments were continued along the *khāls* which debouch into the main rivers. These continuations are called *hasia bāndhs* and are divided into two classes, viz., those below, and those above, cross-dams. Owing to the practice of cutting the cross-dams during the rains, the former are fundamentally outer embankments and are almost as important as the *ganguria bāndhs*, while the latter are for the greater part of the year inner embankments only.

Khālbāndhi is the name given to the annual construction and cutting of cross-dams, *i.e*, embankments built across the beds of rivers. *Khālkundi* is the periodical excavation of *khāls* to remove the accumulation of silt, the earth being generally utilized to repair the *hasias* on its banks. *Jalnikāsi* is, in substance, the same as the above, except that it is applied to smaller drainage channels only. These drainage channels are an important feature in the agricultural system of Hijilī owing to the practice of dividing the country into blocks by small inner circuit embankments, instead of into fields, as elsewhere, by means of *ails* or field ridges. Each of these blocks require a *jalnikāsi khāl*, or drainage channel, to carry off the surplus water of the circuit, when the rainfall is excessive; while to prevent the same result following when the rainfall is not excessive, these channels usually have small *hasias* along their banks which can be cut through in a few minutes if necessary.

Bherabāndhi and *bheribāndhi* are names applied to the system of interior embankments which it remains to describe. The term *bherabāndhi* is applied to large embankments of this class, while *bheribāndhi* is a generic name for all the smaller interior embankments. The latter are mainly of three classes: (1) *Jalnikāsi hasias* or parallel embankments intended to prevent the drainage channels carrying off the water when not in excess, (2) *grāmsharahad-bheris* or embankments marking out village boundaries, (3) *grām-bheris* or small inner embankments, the object of which is to distribute the rainfall fairly by keeping in each tract of country the amount it actually receives: were they not kept up, the water would not stand on the fields, but would flow off towards the lower levels, swamping the lands there and leaving insufficient moisture for the higher lands. As regards the utility of these last embankments, Sir Henry Harrison wrote in the Bengal Embankment Manual, 1875:—"*Grāmbheris* can only be resorted to where the country is so level that an embankment to an entire rice *māt* or plain retains a sufficiency of water on each part of the enclosed area without holding up a superfluity on any portion. It is evident that more than a few inches of difference in leve

would be fatal to this, and hence it is only in very level tracts that *grāmbheris* would work. On the other hand, when *ails* are resorted to, the water of one field has to drain off (when it is in excess or when it is wished to drain it off) through the adjacent fields, passing from field to field. As, however, in general all fields simultaneously have an excess of water, this proceeding becomes very detrimental to the lower fields unless the decline is sufficient to enable the water to flow off easily. Hence in a very flat country like Hijilī the *ail* system would cause much more inconvenience as regards drainage than does the *grāmbheri* system, each circuit having its drainage *khāl* common to the whole circuit. Again, the *grāmbheri* system involves a certain amount of co-operation, which the rest of the embankment system in Hijilī has taught the ryots to resort to more readily than elsewhere, though this co-operation is still very imperfect. To this may be added many incidental advantages, which would have their weight *ceteris paribus*, such as that the *grāmbheris* make useful village paths for men and cattle when the land is under water, that in the event of an outer embankment being breached they may form a useful protection, and that they take up on the whole much less land than the far more numerous field ridges."

History. Most of the embankments at present maintained as public embankments were in existence before the establishment of British rule. The zamīndārs appear to have been responsible for their maintenance, but this duty was not properly discharged, most of the embankments being more or less dilapidated. The East Indian Company at first appointed the local officers as *ex-officio* superintendents to watch their condition and see that they were kept in a proper state of repair. Subsequently, by Regulation XXXIII of 1793, the Collectors were placed in charge of all public embankments repaired at Government expense and also of embankments in estates which had been brought under *khās* management. At this time two large and heavily embanked estates along the Midnapore coast remained under temporary settlement owing to their peculiarly exposed position. In other large estates in the district, which were permanently settled, though somewhat similarly exposed, Government imposed a cess of 1½ annas per *bighā* and expressly undertook the maintenance of embankments. With these exceptions, it may be stated generally that the duty of maintaining the embankments rested under the Permanent Settlement with the zamīndārs within whose estates they lay.

While, however, large public works were admitted to be a charge on the State, no specification was to be found of the works

which fell under this category. While the obligation of the zamīndārs to construct and maintain all other embankment and drainage works was distinctly recognized, no machinery was provided to enforce attention to these duties. This defect soon made itself apparent, and one of the objects of the next Embankment Regulation (VI of 1806) was to provide a remedy for it. It, therefore, transferred the superintendence of embankments maintained at the expense of Government from the Collectors to Embankment Committees, which were vested with a general control over embankments repaired at the expense of zamīndārs and farmers as well as over those maintained by Government. The Committees were ultimately abolished by Regulation XI of 1829, and their powers were vested in special officers appointed by Government.

In 1837 a Committee was especially appointed to determine what were the obligations of Government as regards the maintenance of the different classes of embankments. The standard by which the Committee judged of these obligations was the actual agreement contained in the *kabuliyats* of the Permanent Settlement, as interpreted by the correspondence of the period and the actual practice since that date, and as further modified by the utility or the contrary of the works in question. The Committee, taking the different denominations one by one, arrived at the following conclusions. The obligation of Government to maintain *ganguria* or main embankments was plain. As regards the *hasia* embankments, the Committee contended that Government was liable, and the Board of Revenue summed up on the same side, urging that the *hasia bāndhs* outside the cross-dams were in fact continuations of *ganguria bāndhs*, while those inside might be included in the generic term *bheribāndhi*. These views were accepted by Government. The liability of Government as regards *khālbāndhi* and *khālkundi* was not open to question, the terms being mentioned specifically in the *kabuliyats*. *Jalnikāsi* was not mentioned in the *kabuliyats* any more than *hasiabāndhi*, but the Committee pointed out that the presumption in favour of this work being done by Government was uniform, and that it was an indispensable portion of the system of agriculture. The Board took the same view, and Government adopted their conclusions. Finally, as regards *bheribāndhi*, Government came to the conclusion that as the repair of these petty embankments had been discontinued since 1815, and as complaints had been made for nineteen years, *i.e.*, till after the three successive storms of 1831, 1832 and 1833 had devastated the country, the *grāmbheris* could not be of much practical value. "Unless,"

it was stated, "stronger grounds than have already been produced can be shown, His Honour is opposed to any expenditure of the public money on account of *bāndhs* coming under the description of *bheribāndhi*."

For the future maintenance of the embankments, the Committee proposed, and Government sanctioned, an arrangement by which all exterior embankments and subsidiary works should be kept in repair through the agency of the Public Works Department, and the interior embankments and subsidiary works should be made over to the custody of the zamīndārs with a suitable allowance or remission. In other words, while Government undertook the obligation of maintaining the larger embankments and water-courses, the responsibility for the maintenance of smaller works was transferred to the zamīndārs, to whom an allowance was made for the purpose. Specific orders were not passed by Government on the question of the maintenance of *grāmbheris*, the utility of which was questioned, but it was held by Government that "it was under no obligation to keep them up." It was clearly intended that if they were to be kept up at all, they must be maintained by the zamīndārs and ryots themselves, and the question of their maintenance was left for the zamīndārs to decide on consideration of their own interest.

This system was done away with in the year 1873, when the Bengal Embankment Act (VI of 1873) was passed. This Act distinctly defined the liability of Government for the maintenance of certain embankments and water-courses enumerated in Schedule D. It placed them under the charge of the Collector of the district and an engineer with carefully defined powers. Power was taken by Government to take over other embankments not included in Schedule D, and to take charge of any water-courses of which it might be deemed expedient, in the public interest, to take charge. It was provided that the cost of such works should be in the first instance advanced by Government, and afterwards realized from the parties benefited. The principal features of this Act were as follows :—(1) It was declared law that the persons benefited are responsible for the expenditure on all necessary embankment and drainage works, except so far as Government accepted definite obligations at the time of the Permanent Settlement. (2) The powers of the executive officers of Government to control works affecting the inundation and drainage of the country were amplified and more clearly defined. (3) The duty of supervising this department and of initiating works was transferred from the Superintending Engineer to the

Collector. (4) Ample provision was made for enabling the Collector to act summarily in cases of emergency.

In the course of eight years defects came to light in the working of Act VI of 1873, and suggestions were made to facilitate its future administration. Under this Act certain powers for altering the course of embankments, removing embankments, and starting new works were vested in the Collector; but it was found that the questions involved in their exercise were so important, and so often affected large tracts of country, that it was not deemed safe to leave them in the hands of Collectors. The Board were therefore obliged to issue instructions prohibiting the exercise of these powers without their previous approval. Again, the procedure for recovery of the expenses incurred on works of this kind, which was prescribed by Act VI of 1873, required that notices should be served at every step on every petty landholder, and was so elaborate and intricate that it was declared to be unworkable. To remedy these defects, Act II of 1882 was passed, which left the substantive law as it stood and made amendments in details in order to facilitate the working of the law.

Amongst other things, this Act specifically empowered the Collector not only to take charge of existing embankments and water-courses, but also to enforce the construction of any new embankments and water-courses which appeared to be required for the improvement of the public health or for the protection of any village or cultivable land. General power was taken to prevent the unauthorized construction of, or addition to, an embankment in a notified area (sections 6 and 76), whether it might affect an existing public embankment or not. It was at the same time provided that, while the Collector of the district has authority to initiate proceedings under the Act, action shall not be taken, except when there is urgent need, till the matter has been considered by the Board of Revenue and by Government. The Act also empowered (section 43) the Lieutenant-Governor to remove any embankment from Schedule D, when no longer required in the public interest, but this power was to be exercised only after enquiry made by the Collector, as far as possible, in accordance with Part II of the Act. Another addition of much practical value was that (sections 63 to 67) which provided for the estimation of the probable cost of upkeep of an embankment or water-course for a series of years and for the formation of a contract between Government and the persons responsible for the upkeep, by which Government undertakes the work of maintenance for a fixed annual sum. This greatly

simplifies the procedure in apportioning the charges to the estates concerned.

Description of embankments.

Regarding the different embankments of Midnapore, Mr. W. A. Inglis, C.S.I., writes in *The Canals and Flood Banks of Bengal* (1909):—"In the southern and eastern portions of this district, extending from the Rūpnārāyan river to the Subarnarekhā river, there is an extremely complicated system of embankments, or rather, for the greater part, there is no system, and it will be more correct to say that there is a maze of embankments. There are embankments which endeavour, with little or no success, to give protection from the flood caused by the upland waters of the Dwārakeswar, the Silai and the Kāsai, and there are embankments which do so, with more success, from the flood of the Subarnarekhā river. There are embankments on the face of the estuary of the Hooghly which are of much value in keeping out the salt water inundation due to high tides and to storm-waves. There are, again, embankments which exclude tidal water from low lands away from the sea face or main estuary. These are credited, and probably justly, with having caused much injury to the *regime* of the channels on the margin of which they stand, and they are a doubtful benefit to the country. There are a number of circuit embankments, notably the Chetua and the Argoal circuits, which are instances of embanking at its very worst. On the other hand, the sea-dyke in South Hijilī is a very fine work and an instance of embanking well applied."

For administrative purposes the embankments of the district are of two classes, viz., (1) those which are the property of Government and of which the cost of maintenance is a charge against Provincial revenues, and (2) those which are the property of persons interested in the land protected and which are maintained by Government at their expense. The embankments of the first class, which are enumerated in Schedule D of Act VI (B.C.) of 1873, include embankments of which the maintenance is incumbent on Government under the provisions of the Permanent Settlement, those of the Burdwān Rāj estate which were taken over in 1804, and some additional lengths which have at various times been added to the schedule under the provisions of section 43 of Act II (B.C.) of 1882. The embankments of the first class had an aggregate length of 228 miles in 1907-08, and there were 26 embankments of the second class with a total length of 236 miles. The latter may be divided into two classes, viz., (1) those of which the cost of maintenance is recovered by the payment of a fixed annual charge under a contract extending over a term of years, and

(2) those of which the cost of maintenance is recovered from the proprietors of the land benefited by an annual apportionment of the actual expenditure incurred by the Public Works Department. Seven embankments were maintained under the latter, and nineteen, which are known as *takāvi* embankments, under the former system in 1907-08. The last contract in respect of eighteen of these embankments was fixed at Rs. 49,761 per annum for fifteen years from 1st April 1904, and at Rs. 994 for the Jokai embankment.

For practical purposes the embankments may be divided into four groups as follows:—

(1) The embankments falling within the Burdwān zamīndāri on the banks of the Silai and Rūpnārāyan rivers. Except for a short distance at the southern end, to which salt water reaches, their object is to keep out sandy fresh water inundations. The cost of maintenance is borne by Government in consequence of an arrangement made a century ago, by which the obligation of maintaining embankments over almost the whole of Western Bengal is still determined. At first, an allowance of Rs. 60,001 was made to the Rājā of Burdwan, *i.e.*, an abatement of that amount was made in his *sadar jamā* for the express purpose of enabling him to keep up these embankments. He failed, however, to keep them in efficient repair, and officers of Government had to make good the deficiencies. The result was that by 1804 there was a heavy claim against the Rājā to meet the cost of these repairs. After some delay and refusals to pay, the Rājā petitioned the Embankment Committee to take over the Rs. 60,001 and carry out the repairs for him. This was finally allowed by Government, the Rājā agreeing to pay Rs. 53,742 in addition to his ordinary revenue. The difference between the sum of Rs. 60,001 and Rs. 53,742 is due to a portion of the zamindārī having been sold in the *interim.*

(2) The embankments along the Kāsai, the object of which is to keep the fresh water floods of the Kāsai from devastating the low country through which it flows. On the right bank, as the Haldi is approached, the Kāsai receives the drainage of a large tract of country south-east of Midnapore, and here the embankments are not continuous but are broken up into a series of circuit embankments to prevent the low country from being swamped by the accumulated drainage.

(3) The embankments on the Kāliāghai. These also are intended to keep out fresh water and are maintained at the expense of the zamīndārs where the estates are permanently settled, and of the Government where they are temporarily

settled; the latter are chiefly in *pargana* Patāspur, which at the time of the Permanent Settlement was under the Marāthās.

(4) The embankments on the estuary of the Hooghly, including the great sea-dyke, which are designed to keep out salt water. These are by far the most important of all the Midnapore embankments: indeed, they are probably the most important embankments in the whole of the Province. These embankments may be dealt with in three parts, viz., (1) the part between the Subarnarekhā river and the Rasūlpur called formerly South Hijilī, (2) the part between the Rasūlpur and the Haldi, or North Hijilī, and (3) the part between the Haldi and the Rūpnārāyan, *i.e.*, the Doro Dumnān *pargana*. In the first part there is the sea-dyke, which is intended to be proof against storm-waves. In the second and third parts the embankments give protection against high tides, but are liable to be overtopped by storm-waves.

The sea-dyke. The principal embankment is the great sea-dyke, which is designed to keep out not merely a high tidal wave but storm-waves. Such waves accompany the cyclones which form periodically in the Bay of Bengal, and which almost invariably break upon the coast somewhere along the reach of 50 miles separating Balasore from the mouth of the Hooghly. The storm-wave, if it once effects an entry, sweeps over the flat country separating the sea from the great sand ridge some 4 to 8 miles inland, which depends on the sea-dyke for its protection. This is a magnificent work, 41 miles long, and in places 25 feet high and 150 feet in breadth at its base. The dyke commences on the west from the range of sand hills along the coast line near Birkul; further west these hills, reaching down to the sea, constitute a natural barrier. Thence it follows a tortuous alignment along the sea coast and up the inlets—this alignment is a legacy bequeathed to the British by the former rulers of the country—as far as the Rasūlpur river, where the Hooghly may be said to commence.

Other embankments. Other embankments, which may be specially mentioned, are as follows. The right bank of the Hooghly is embanked, from the Rasūlpur river, by the Khejrī (Kedgeree) and Doro Dumnān embankments, 20 and 95 miles long, respectively. The west bank of the Rūpnārāyan is embanked from its junction with the Hooghly as far north as Ghātāl; and there are also embankments on both sides of the Haldi and Rasūlpur. Near the embouchure of the Rasūlpur a *khāl*, called the Kunjapur Khāl, runs into the Hooghly, and with the Hooghly and Rasūlpur forms an island on which stand Khejrī (Kedgeree) and the Kaukhāli (Cowcolly) lighthouse. This island, which has an area of about 20 square

miles, is protected by a circuit embankment. In the extreme south-west of the district lies the Jokai embankment, which was constructed with the object of excluding the flood waters of the Subarnarekhā from a large plain to the west of Contai, which they would otherwise inundate.

CHAPTER VIII.

RENTS, WAGES AND PRICES.

RENTS. THE rates of rent current in different parts of the district vary considerably, and in many parts it is difficult to ascertain the actual rent paid by the cultivators. In some estates there are no written leases, and the amounts entered in the ryots' rent receipts often represent only a portion of the payments actually made. When written leases are granted, it is a general practice for the landlord, on granting or renewing the lease, to take a considerable premium, or *salāmi*, in cash and to fix a low rate of rent. As the *salāmi* is usually not entered in the lease (to avoid stamp duty), the total actual payments for the land leased cannot be ascertained without elaborate enquiries; but it is reported that the *salāmi* varies from Rs. 30 to Rs. 75 and more an acre. Further, since the passing of the Bengal Tenancy Act, it has become a practice of the landlord to exact from the purchaser of occupancy rights a fee equal to 25 per cent. of the purchase-money before he will recognize the purchaser; and in the case of succession by inheritance and subdivision of holdings among relatives, he generally exacts from Rs. 3 to Rs. 5 a *bighā* as his fee for recognition. Such payments have been held to be anticipated enhancements of rent. *Abwābs*, or irregular exactions, are also often levied from ryots except in the area irrigated from the canal, where little beyond the rent is paid, except *tahrīr* or the *gumāshta's* collection fee of one pice in the rupee, and that not always. In some *parganas* again, it is the custom for ryots to obtain remissions from their landlords for *shuka*, *i.e.*, loss by drought, and *hājā*, *i.e.*, loss by inundation. The Courts have held that this is a custom enforceable as a right when there is a total loss, but that, when, as a previous practice, landlords have granted partial remissions for partial loss, it is of grace only. Disputes about *shuka* and *hājā* are a source of friction between landlords and tenants in various parts of the district, and in some places the parties execute agreements by which, for a reduced rent, the ryots agree to take all risk.

Rates vary from *pargana* to *pargana*, and also in the same *pargana*, according to the quality of the soil, the position of the land, etc.; and conditions in this large district are so different that it is impossible to give averages that will be of much value. There is a further difficulty in that the whole district has not come under settlement, and hence reliable statistics are not available. Land on which *āman*, or winter, rice is grown usually fetches about 50 per cent. more than that used for *āus*, or early, rice, while sugarcane land is about twice as valuable as the best rice land. The rent of land growing pulses is about the same as that paid for *āus* land, while land suitable for oil-seeds is about half as valuable.

Rent settlements.

A settlement of eighteen temporarily-settled estates in *pargana* Patāspur in the Contai subdivision was carried out between 1893 and 1898, in the course of which rents were settled over an area of 39½ square miles for fifteen years with effect from 1897. Here the lands are almost entirely low lands on which winter rice is the only crop grown. There are fifteen or sixteen rates of rent often differing from each other by a few pies, but the average incidence of rent paid by occupancy ryots for settled cultivated lands is Rs. 3-4-1 per acre. The average area held by each ryot is about 1⅜ acres. Settlement operations are now (1909) in progress in fifty-six Government estates, ten temporarily-settled estates with an area of 600 square miles, and in a number of zamīndāri estates with an aggregate area of 468 square miles. In the Majnamutha and Jalamutha estates the rent settlement orders involve an enhancement of three annas in the rupee except on homestead and unprotected lands. This enhancement is based on the rise of prices that has occurred since rents were last fixed. It would have been easy to prove that on this ground an enhancement of eight annas or more was justifiable, but Government has been content to take three annas in the rupee and to guarantee that the major portion of the enhancement shall be devoted to improving the drainage channels and embankments of the estate.

Produce rents.

A portion of the area under cultivation is held under a system of produce rents, of which there are two common forms called *sanja* and *bhāg jot*. The former means that the actual cultivator, the *bhāgchāsi*, pays the man from whom he holds the land a fixed amount of grain as rent, whatever may be the outturn; the latter that the cultivator makes over to the lessor a certain proportion, generally half, of the produce as rental; the cultivator often supplies the seed and is alone recognized by the landlord.

WAGES.

The following table shows the daily wages paid for different classes of labour in 1895, 1900, 1905, and 1909 :—

CLASS OF LABOUR.	1895.	1900.	1905.	1909.
	As. P.	As. P.	As. P.	As. P.
Common mason ...	3 4½	5 1½	6 0	8 0
Superior do. ...	7 0	7 0	9 0	12 0
Common carpenter ...	4 9	5 9	5 9	6 6
Superior do. ...	6 4½	8 6	9 0	10 6
Common blacksmith ...	5 3¾	4 7½	5 9	8 0
Superior do. ...	9 3	9 1½	8 3	12 0
Male adult cooly ...	3 0¾	3 7½	4 1½	5 6
Female do. ...	1 10	2 4½	2 9	3 6

Agricultural labourers usually receive one meal (*jalpān*) a day in part payment, and during the busy agricultural seasons get higher wages than at other times, *e.g.*, for ploughing land, sowing or transplanting rice, or harvesting the produce. The poorer cultivators also often work as labourers on the *badli* system, *i.e.*, they exchange labour without receiving any wages. Blacksmiths receive payments in grain at harvest time for the repair of the villagers' agricultural implements throughout the year. The price of unskilled labour has risen considerably since the advent of the railway.

Supply of labour.

The following remarks on the supply of labour in Midnapore are quoted from Mr. Foley's *Report on Labour in Bengal* (1906): "There is a certain amount of emigration from Contai and Tamlūk to the Sundarbans, but the land is good and the people are well off. Ghātāl is subject to inundation, and therefore is not so prosperous; but it contains good rice land, and labour is probably not obtainable. There is a great demand for labour in the Bengal-Nāgpur workshops at Kharagpur, so this neighbourhood is also to be excluded. There remains the rest of the Sadar subdivision, where there is much jungle and where the land is poor. The Santāls, who form the second most numerous caste in the district, and are to be found in this part, migrate in some numbers every year in November for earth-work, crop-cutting, etc., to the neighbouring districts to the east, returning in time for their cultivation. They refuse to go to Calcutta, as they are afraid of disease. None of them go to the coal-fields, and I have heard of no efforts being made to induce them to go, though there is recruitment in the district for the tea-gardens. All this part of the district seems therefore to contain labour which ought naturally to go to the coal mines. The European zamīndārs in

the north would probably object to emigration, as they need the Santāl labour for jungle-clearing and cultivation; but, excluding this part and also the neighbourhood of Kharagpur, the area left is still large. I have heard of labour for the docks being obtained from the district, but I was unable to ascertain from what part. I can only recommend Midnapore as a recruiting ground for the coal-fields."

PRICES.

The following table shows the average prices in seers per rupee of common articles of food during the last four years:—

ARTICLES OF FOOD.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.
	S. CH.	S. CH.	S. CH.	S. CH.
Common rice	13 8	9 2	7 12	8 15
Wheat	9 1	9 14	8 0	...
Gram	11 13	10 6	8 14	7 12
Salt	15 1	15 11	18 12	20 0

The contrast between these figures and those for earlier years is remarkable. In 1871, for instance, the price of common rice was 25 seers per rupee, and in the ten years ending in 1903 it varied from 18½ seers to less than 12 seers, excluding the famine year of 1897 when it fell to 10¼ seers. After 1897 till the end of 1903 the average price was 13⅝ seers, but as shown in the table it has since risen even above the famine rate of 1897. There has been a similar rise in the price of other articles of food except salt, of which the price has fallen owing to the reduction of the duty. These variations in prices are common to other districts in Bengal and are due to economic conditions which have affected not only Midnapore but the whole of the Province.

CHAPTER IX.

MINES, MANUFACTURES AND TRADE.

MINES. THE district contains no mines in the proper sense of the word, but laterite is quarried on a fairly extensive scale. It is of the kind called rock laterite, which is close grained, hard and durable, and is generally met with at a depth varying from 2 to 4 feet below the surface. Its economic value will be apparent from the account of the *Geology of Bankura, Midnapore, and Orissa* published in the Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. I. "The rock most generally employed for building purposes in these districts is laterite. This is largely used in the construction of the walls of houses, and in buildings also of greater pretensions. Few rocks present greater advantages from its peculiar character; it is easy to cut and shape when first dug, and it becomes hard and tough after exposure to the air, while it seems to be very little acted on by the weather. Indeed, in many of the sculptured stones of some of the oldest buildings, temples, etc., in the district, the chisel marks are as fresh and sharp as when first built. It is, perhaps, not so strong, nor so capable of resisting great pressure or bearing great weights, as some of the sandstones or the more compact kinds of gneiss, but it certainly possesses amply sufficient strength for all ordinary purposes. It is largely used at the present time, but has also been employed from the earliest period from which the temples and buildings of the country date. And the elaborate specimens of carving and ornament, which some of these present, show that the nodular structure and irregular surface of the laterite does not prevent its effective use for the purposes of ordinary ornamentation, as mouldings, etc. Another advantage it possesses over other rocks is the facility of transport, it being generally found in the low grounds, and often at no great distance from some of the many streams which traverse the vicinity. Slabs from 4 to 5 feet long are easily procurable of this rock. They are quarried in a rude but effective way; a groove is cut with a rudely pointed pick round the slab; another is made underneath, and then a few wedges driven in split off

the block. The more loose and gravelly forms of the laterite are universally used for road-metal, for which purpose they are admirably adapted."

Limestone is also quarried, and magnesian potstones are worked. The chloritic and serpentinous beds found in the gneiss are said to yield a tough compact material, which is, however, soft and easy to work. The most general use of this rock is for the manufacture of plates, bowls, basins, etc. The tools employed in the manufacture of the latter are of the rudest kind. A short round bar of iron pointed at one end, and a wooden mallet suffice to procure from the rock a piece large enough for a plate or bowl. This is rudely cut into the intended form by the quarryman on the spot, and the materials are then brought down from the quarries or holes on the hillside, and finished by different workmen in the villages below. This is done partly by hand with finer tools, partly on a simple lathe. Alluvial gold has been found in minute quantities in the river sands. Iron exists in the north, and salt is plentiful in the south and east of the district.

There is an amusing record of a supposed discovery of a coal mine in the grounds of the Central Jail at Midnapore. During the sinking of a boring for an artesian well in the year 1869, a European convict who was placed in charge of the work, first as a prisoner and afterwards, when his time had expired, as a free man, expressed a confident opinion that coal would be struck if the boring were carried on beyond the depth of 118 feet, where a second water-bearing stratum had been found. Proof of the correctness of these predictions was soon forthcoming, for at 121 feet it was announced that a coal seam had been reached, and at a depth of 130 feet it was believed that the seam still continued. Samples of the coal on being analysed gave excellent results, and much interest was excited by what appeared to be an important and valuable discovery. Orders were issued to test the extent and dip of the seam by additional borings, and new boring tools were ordered by telegram from England. These were put down, and operations were continued with varying and most unexpected results, which it is needless to detail. The operations, which were at first conducted independently of the Superintendent of the Geological Survey, were subsequently carried on in communication with him. There being no *à priori* argument against the possibility of coal being found under the alluvium and laterite of Midnapore, the Executive Engineer, who initiated the operations, was advised as to the best method of testing the matter thoroughly. Eventually, on the bore

holes being subjected to a careful watch, the coal ceased to appear, and shortly afterwards, in December 1870, the ex-convict absconded. On his house being searched, prepared coal was found, as well as large lumps, and it was completely established that all the coal which had been brought up by the boring tools had been first put down, and that twelve months of labour and not a little expense had been caused by his cunning and deception. The subsequent proof, to the satisfaction of the authorities, that there never had been a coal seam was not obtained without a further expenditure of time.*

MANUFACTURES. Railway workshops.

Among the industrial concerns of Midnapore first place must be given to the Bengal-Nāgpur Railway Workshops at Kharagpur. These workshops were opened in 1904 and are equipped with machinery of the most modern type, electrically driven, for the construction and repair of locomotives and rolling-stock. The works cover an area of 77 acres (of which 9 acres are roofed in), and contain an electric power-house, in which is generated the current for working the machines as well as for lights and fans in the bungalows of the staff. The average daily number of operatives employed in 1908 was 5,975. As there were no skilled mechanics available locally when the works were first started, it was found necessary to import all the skilled labour, and to pay high wages to attract it. Consequently, there is a curious miscellany to be found in the works of men from the Punjab, Bombay, the United Provinces, the Central Provinces, Bengal and Madras.

Silk-weaving.

Silk-weaving was formerly an important industry in Midnapore, but it has been declining for some years, so much so that a silk factory, owned by Messrs. Louis, Payen & Co. of Lyons, at Guruli in the Dāspur thāna had to be closed a few years ago. There were also till recently factories at Maheshpur in the same thāna, and at Garhpartābpur, Rāmchandrapur and Mahārājpur in the Ghātāl thāna. Mulberry cocoon-rearing is carried on in the Ghātāl and Tamlūk subdivisions, mostly in the Ghātāl, Dāspur and Garbheta thānas; the cocoons are used locally and are also exported, especially to the Bānkurā district. Four varieties of cocoons are reared, viz., (1) *nistari* or *madrāsi*, (2) *chota-palu* or *deshi*, (3) *bara-palu* and (4) *china-palu*, which are reared chiefly in the Tamlūk subdivision. The *bara-palu* is an annual variety, reared in the spring (February and March), which produces indifferently white, greenish, salmon-coloured and bright yellow cocoons. What is called *dhali* (white) silk is made out of thread spun from white *bara-palu* cocoons. There

* Economic Geology of India (1881), pp. 76, 77.

is another class of polyvoltine *dhali* cocoons in Midnapore, called *bulu* (perhaps a corruption of 'blue'), the colour of which is somewhat greenish and not silvery white like *bara-palu* silk. These *bulu* cocoons were originally selected out of *nistari* and *china* varieties, among which light-coloured cocoons often occur.

For quantity or proportion of silk, the *chota-palu* ranks next to the *bara-palu*, though the fibre of *nistari* is softer and finer. The latter supplies the principal crop of the year, but the cocoons produce a smaller proportion of silk. Picked *bara-palu* cocoons may yield as much as 14 per cent. of silk, but the average actually obtained in Midnapore, where these cocoons are more largely reared than anywhere else in Bengal, is much smaller, viz., about 7 per cent. The *chota-palu*, *nistari* and *china* cocoons are small, and they yield much smaller proportions of silk than in the northern districts. The yield of silk obtained from them are:—*chota-palu*, 5½ to 6¼ per cent.; *nistari*, 5 to 6¼ per cent., and *china*, 5¼ to 6¼ per cent.

The principal centre of silk-weaving is Chandrakonā and its neighbourhood, the looms of which are supplied by the products of native reeling from all parts of Midnapore and even from parts of Howrah and Hooghly. Various kinds of silk cloth are also manufactured at Ghātāl and Dāspur and exported to Calcutta and other places. The industry is decadent, for the fabrics have not the same reputation as those of Murshidābād, though silk cloths of almost as good a quality may be obtained at a cheaper rate.* As much as 20,000 lbs. of raw silk is turned out yearly, and in 1907-08 the value of the silk fabrics or pieces woven in the district was reported to be Rs. 1,31,120.

Tusser-weaving. Tusser cocoons are found in the jungles of Gogoi, Nunga, Silda and Rāmgāon and are also imported from Mayūrbhanj and Singhbhūm. Thence they find their way to the villages of Anandapur in thāna Keshpur and Kesiāri in thāna Nārāyangarh. These villages are inhabited by weavers, who prepare various sorts of *dhotis*, *sāris*, and *thāns*, which they dispose of locally and also send to Calcutta for sale. At one time the weavers of Anandapur and Kesiāri made a prosperous livelihood by preparing tusser cloth, but during the last twenty years the industry has been on the decline owing to the importation of machine-made European silk cloths of all sorts. The best weavers now complain that they can hardly make Rs. 10 a month

* N. G. Mukharji, *Monograph on the Silk Fabrics of Bengal*, pp. 3, 8-10, 31, 44.

for their livelihood. Besides weaving plain tusser, the weavers dye the cloths red, yellow, green and purple. They produce two special kinds of coloured cloths, viz., (1) *mayurkanthi*, in which red tusser silk is used for the warp and green for the weft, and (2) *pitambari*, which is prepared by using red silk for the warp and yellow for the weft.

Cotton and wool weaving. Cotton cloth is manufactured on country looms in most villages, but the industry has long been on the decline owing to the imports of cheaper machine-made cloths. In the last few years, however, the *swadeshi* movement has created an increased demand for country-made cloths, and this has given an impetus to the industry. The Ghātāl subdivision is the chief centre of manufacture. At Chandrakonā and Rādhānagar, *dhotis*, *sāris* and *urānis* of good quality are manufactured and exported in considerable quantities every week to the Howrah mart. Various kinds of striped cloths are also manufactured for coats and shirts. Blankets are woven by some Gareris, who have migrated from the United Provinces and formed some small colonies in Midnapore.

Mat-making. Mat-making is carried on extensively in the south of the district, especially near Sābang, whence comes the Cyprus matting of Calcutta, which is used for matting floors. The industry in the Sābang and Pānskura thānas gives employment to about 1,000 workers, and their products are said to fetch Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 2,000 on each *hāt* day at each of the four recognized local markets. Of late years there have been increased exports, but the profits have not increased correspondingly on account of the rise in the price of jute string and *mandari* reeds. The industry is a flourishing one, for the workers have a steady market close to their own homes, and there are four leading dealers who export goods to Postābazar in Calcutta. The best mats are said to be made at Raghunāthbāri, but excellent matting is also made at Kāsijorā and Nārājol. The number of mats manufactured in 1907-08 was 448,300.

Brass and bell-metal. The manufacture of brass and bell-metal utensils, such as cups, plates, and cooking pots, is carried on at Ghātāl, Kharār, Midnapore, Chandrakonā and Rāmjibanpur. At the two places first named the industry is said to be more highly organized than in any other part of the Province. The masters there are enterprising and wealthy; they obtain the material in economically large quantities, *e.g.*, tin from the Straits Settlements, copper from Japan, etc.; they distribute the labour and pay the piece-worker; and they have a steady demand from Bara Bazar

in Calcutta. Some have more than 100 men in their factories, and it is said that out of a population of 9,000 at Kharār 4,000 are metal workers. "The whole village resounds with the beat of the hammer on the bell-metal."*

Molasses are manufactured to a considerable extent, the outturn in 1907-08 being 431,060 maunds (besides 3,500 maunds of sugar-candy) as compared with 5,10,773 maunds in 1906-07. Earthen pots are manufactured on a large scale in the Ghātāl subdivision for the Calcutta market; the potters are well off and their earnings are considerable. In Tamlūk some attempts are being made to turn out galvanized iron buckets and tin trunks, but the outturn is as yet small. Other industries.

EXTINCT INDUSTRIES. Indigo manufacture.

Formerly the manufacture of indigo was an important industry, but it has almost entirely ceased since Messrs. R. Watson & Co. closed their factories in 1898, owing to the low prices caused by the competition of synthetic dye. This company had been concerned with silk and indigo manufacture in this district for nearly a century. After closing the factories, they devoted themselves to developing their landed property, but a few years ago sold their properties, which were acquired by the Midnapore Zamīndāri Company.

Salt manufacture.

The manufacture of salt was until nearly half a century ago a Government monopoly. Both under Muhammadan and English rule large areas in Hijilī were kept under direct management by Government so as to afford fuel and facilities for manufacture of salt. The *jalpai* or salt lands were those portions which being exposed to the overflowing of tides were strongly impregnated with saline particles, and were subdivided into *khālārīs* or working places. Mr. Grant's Report on the Revenue of Bengal, dated April 1786,† states that each *khālārī*, on an average, yielded 233 maunds of salt, requiring the labour of seven *malangis*, or salt manufacturers, who by an easy process of filtration, and by boiling the brine with firewood collected from the neighbouring jungles, completed their operations between November and June before the setting in of the rains. The savings from these six months' wages enabled the salt-workers to retire to their homes for the remainder of the season to cultivate their arable (*madhuri*) lands, which they held either rent-free, or under favourable terms, under the denomination of *chākrān* or service lands.

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* J. G. Cumming, *Review of the Industrial Position and Prospects in Bengal in 1908*, Part II, p. 24.

† Fifth Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company (London, 1812. Madras reprint, 1884).

The number of *khālārīs* in Midnapore under the Muhammadan rule was estimated about four thousand; and the Crown rent yielded a revenue of about Rs. 43,560. The nominal cost price of the salt was Rs. 60 for every hundred maunds, and the difference between this price and the prime cost fell into the hands of ministers, favourite servants or merchants, who transported the salt to distant markets on their own account, and made large profits by means of this authorized but oppressive monopoly. The principal monopolist had the title of Fakhar-ul-tujjar (pride of merchants) or Mālik-ul-tujjar (king of merchants). The salt was sold to the people at an average price of Rs. 2 a maund during the first half of the seventeenth century. After the British power was established in Bengal, the greater share of this lucrative trade fell into the hands of the English; and Mr. J. Grant, in his Report of 1786, estimated the quantity of salt annually manufactured in Hijilī at 850,000 maunds.

In the year 1781 the East India Company established a Salt Department, and deprived the zamīndārs of the right to manufacture salt on their estates. In return for the loss of profits, the zamīndārs received a certain fixed allowance (*mālikānā*) and a further allowance (*mushāhārā*) upon condition of their rendering aid in the manufacture of salt. They also obtained a grant of *khālārī* rents for the lands of which they were dispossessed when Government took upon itself the monopoly of salt manufacture. This monopoly continued in the hands of Government till about 1861, when the State relinquished the manufacture, leaving it to private parties, subject to the payment of a salt duty. The manufacture by private persons soon, however, declined owing to the competition of Liverpool salt brought out at low rates, which drove the native manufacture out of the market.

TRADE.

The principal article of trade is rice, which is exported mainly to Calcutta. The other exports are sugar and molasses, jute, linseed, gram, pulses, charcoal, brass and bell-metal ware, timber, hides, mats, silk and cotton cloths, tusser silk, pottery and vegetables. The chief imports are cotton goods, coal and coke, kerosine oil, gunny, salt, tobacco, potatoes, enamelled ware, nails, etc. The principal trading marts are Midnapore, Ghātāl, Tamlūk, Kukrahāti, Pānskura, Chandrakonā, Bālighai, Kesiāri, Garhbeta and Nāwādā.

Trade centres.

The commerce of the district is chiefly carried on by means of permanent markets, such as those mentioned, but a considerable local trade also takes place at fairs and religious gatherings. The principal of these fairs and gatherings are held

at (1) Tulsichaurā, on the bank of the Kāliāghai river, in honour of a celebrated spiritual preceptor named Gokulānand Goswāmi; (2) at Mahishādal in the Tamlūk subdivision on the occasion of the Rath festival of Jagannāth in the month of June; (3) at Egrā in the Contai subdivision in February or March, in honour of Sambhunāth or Siva, which lasts for three days; (4) at Andhiri, in the months of November or December, in honour of Gangānand Rai, an image of Siva; (5) at Jhāripur, in honour of Sambhunāth or Siva, which lasts for eight days, in the month of April; (6) at Kutabpur, in honour of the goddess Brahmānī, in April or May, which also lasts for eight days; (7) at Gopīballabhpur on the river Subarnarekhā. The fair last mentioned is held in honour of Chaitanya, an image of whom is here installed. A wealthy Rājā of the district made a grant of considerable landed property for the upkeep of the worship, and a large establishment of priests is maintained for the performance of the ceremonies. Besides these fairs, three or four religious trading gatherings take place every year in the Bāgri *pargana*, and are frequented by five or six thousand people who come to worship an image of Krishna.

CHAPTER X.

MEANS OF COMMUNICATION.

THE district is well provided with means of communication. The tidal rivers, such as the Hooghly, Rūpnārāyan, Haldi, and Rasūlpur, afford a natural and easy means of communication with Calcutta from the east and south. The Hijilī and Orissa Coast Canals in the Contai and Tamlūk subdivisions, and the Midnapore High Level Canal in the Sadar and Tamlūk subdivisions, are connected with these rivers and are still used considerably for the rice export trade. Four branches of the Bengal-Nāgpur Railway radiate to the north, east, south and west from Kharagpur, traversing about 150 miles of country within the district. There is also a network of roads, but, in spite of this, much of the traffic in the interior is carried on by means of pack-bullocks.

RAILWAYS. The main line of the Bengal-Nāgpur Railway from Howrah to Nāgpur crosses the district from east to west. From Kharagpur the East Coast section branches off to the south to Madras, and the line to Gomoh branches off to the north through Bānkurā and the Jherria coal-fields. Through communication with Calcutta was established in 1901, and the line to the north was opened in 1903. The chief centre of traffic is Kharagpur, which is the head-quarters of the Loco., Carriage and Wagon Departments of the Railway.

The following is a list of the stations in the district with their distance from Calcutta :—

MAIN LINE.		EAST COAST LINE.	
Station.	Miles.	Station.	Miles.
Kolā Ghāt ...	34	Kharagpur ...	72
Machida ...	36	Benapur ...	79
Bhogpur	40	Nārāyangarh ...	86
Pānskura ...	44	Contai Road ...	94
Haur	50	Nekurseni ...	99
Bālichak ...	56	Dāntan	104

Main line.		Gomoh line.	
Station.	Miles.	Station.	Miles.
Madpur	63	Kharagpur ...	72
Jakpur	67	Gokulpur ...	76
Kharagpur ...	72	Midnapore ...	80
Kalaikunda ...	77	Godapiasāl ...	88
Sardiha	86	Sālbani ...	94
Jhargrām ...	95	Chandrakonā Road ...	101
Gidni	105	Garhbeta ...	111
		Peārdoba ...	117

The most important railway project affecting this district that has been put forward in recent years is the proposal to construct a railway from Pānskura to Luff Point on the Hooghly, and to establish a coal port at the latter place. The question of providing facilities for the shipment of coal on the right bank of the river Hooghly below the James and Mary Sands was raised in 1897 by a Calcutta firm, which proposed to build a dock at Geonkhāli. The rapid expansion of the coal trade led to a revival of the scheme in 1900, when the Agent of the Bengal-Nāgpur Railway suggested the establishment of an export coal depôt at Luff Point, connected by a line of railway with the Bengal-Nāgpur Railway at Pānskura station (25 miles). This scheme was considered by a Commission specially appointed by the Government of India. The findings of the Commission were briefly that—(1) a coal depôt at Luff Point would be of little use to the industry as a whole, and it was not desirable to establish one there at present; (2) it would be practicable to establish a coal depôt if required, but it would probably be costly; (3) if established, it should be in the hands of the Port Commissioners at Calcutta. **Railway projects.**

There are two Provincial roads running through the district, which are in charge of the Public Works Department, viz., (1) the Orissa Trunk Road, which enters the district at Kolā on the Rupnārāyan and, passing by Midnapore, runs to Dāntan on the frontier of Orissa, and (2) the Pilgrim Road from Midnapore to Rānīganj. The lengths of these roads within the district are 76 and 36 miles, respectively. Both are bridged and metalled throughout. **Roads.**

and are open at all times of the year; the bridges on the first road were constructed at the expense of Rājā Sukhmai, who bequeathed Rs. 1,50,000 for the purpose of facilitating the journey of pilgrims to Purī.

According to the returns for 1907-08, the District Board maintains 384½ miles of metalled roads and 358 miles of unmetalled roads. There are also a number of village tracks, with an aggregate length of 756 miles, which are managed by the Local Boards and Unions. The most important roads under the District Board are as follows:—(1) The old Bombay Road from Midnapore to Chichra on the Singhbhūm border, 32 miles, metalled and bridged except over the Kāsai river at the 7th mile and the Dalang river on the 29th mile. (2) Ghātāl to Sijua on the Kāsai river on the border of the Mānbhūm district, 52 miles, metalled and bridged except over the Silai at the 12th mile. (3) Pānskura to Tamlūk, 18 miles, metalled and bridged. (4) Contai Road railway station to Contai, 36 miles, metalled and bridged. (5) Pirakata *viâ* Goāltor to Garhbeta, 28 miles, metalled and bridged. (6) The Burdwān Road from Midnapore to the border of the Burdwān district, 35½ miles, of which 4½ miles are metalled. It has bridges or causeways except at the 17th mile over the Trimohani Khāl and at the 29th mile over the Silai river. (7) Garhbeta to Chandrakonā, 17½ miles, metalled and bridged. (8) Tamlūk to Contai, 39½ miles, metalled from Tamlūk to the Haldi river (11 miles), and from Contai to the Rasūlpur river (10 miles), and bridged except over the Haldi and Rasūlpur rivers. (9) Contai to Khejrī (Kedgeree), 16 miles, unmetalled road, bridged except over the Rasūlpur river. (10) Contai to Rāmnagar, 15 miles, an unmetalled road bridged except at the Pichabani Khāl on the 7th mile. Besides the above there are various shorter roads both metalled and unmetalled; a number of feeder roads to the different railway stations, varying in length from 200 yards to 30 miles, have been built or are in process of construction.

WATER COMMUNICATIONS.

There are three navigable canals in the district, viz., the Midnapore High Level Canal, the Hijilī Tidal Canal and the Orissa Coast Canal. The Midnapore Canal runs from opposite Midnapore on the Kāsai river to Dainan on the Rūpnārāyan river, a distance of 36 miles. A regular steamer service was formerly kept up on it, but since the opening of the railway it has been stopped and other traffic has much diminished. The first distributary of this canal is also navigable for small boats, for a distance of 16¾ miles, as far as the neighbourhood of Nārāyangarh. The Hijilī Tidal Canal and the Orissa Coast Canal connect Midnapore

with Orissa on the south and with the Hooghly river on the north, and for the purpose of navigation may be regarded as one continuous canal, though there are really two lengths constructed at different times. Starting at Geonkhāli at the junction of the Rūpnārāyan and Hooghly rivers, it runs to the Haldi river (8 miles), thence to the Rūpnārāyan river (18 miles), and thence through the canalized Sarpai river to Contai (16 miles). About 6 miles above Contai the canal is continued to the boundary of the Balasore district (12 miles), passing through which it terminates at the Matai river. Traffic on this canal has also decreased since the opening of the railway along the east coast, and the regular service of steamers has ceased.

There is a daily steamer service from Calcutta *viâ* Geonkhāli, Tamlūk and Kolā (where the railway crosses the Rūpnārāyan) to Ghātāl, which is maintained by the Calcutta Steam Navigation Company. Country boats ply in the Bay of Bengal, the Hooghly and the other tidal rivers of the district.

BOATS.

Only three or four kinds of boats are in use in this district. For passenger traffic *pānsis* and *bhaolias* are used. A *pānsi* is a small oval-shaped boat covered with a bamboo and mat thatch. A *bhaolia* is a somewhat larger boat with two or three cabins made of wood. During the rainy season, when the low-lying lands are flooded, dug-outs are used by the villagers for going from one village to another. These are scooped out of the trunks of thick *tāl* trees, and are 10 to 12 feet long and about 2 feet broad at the stern and 6 inches at the prow. They are propelled with long poles and can hold only two or three persons. They are called *pankaīs* in the Contai subdivision and *dongās* in other parts of the district. For goods traffic, the people use larger boats having small cabins covered with bamboo and mat thatch at the stern. The capacity of these boats varies from 100 to 1,000 maunds. Goods are stored in the hold, and if of a perishable nature are covered over with mats. In the south of the district stronger and more sea-worthy boats are used, those made near Contai being decked and capable of standing a moderate sea.

POSTAL DEPARTMENT.

There are 144 post-offices in the district and 744 miles of postal communication. The number of postal articles delivered in 1908-09 was 4,324,866, including 1,497,756 letters, 2,012,530 post-cards, 280,878 packets, 470,314 newspapers and 63,388 parcels. The value of money-orders issued in the same year was Rs. 27,78,650 and of those paid Rs. 19,97,568; while the number of Savings Bank deposits was 12,428, the total amount deposited being Rs. 4,71,972. There are 11 postal telegraph offices situated

at Midnapore, Chandrakonā, Contai, Egrā, Garhbeta, Ghātāl, Khirpai, Kolā, Midnapore Civil Court, Pānskura and Tamlūk.

TELEGRAPH LINES.

The earliest telegraph line constructed in India ran to Kedgeree in this district. It is described as follows in the *Imperial Gazetteer of India* (1907), volume III, pages 437 and 439:—"In 1851 Dr. W. B. O'Shaughnessy, Assistant-Surgeon and Professor of Chemistry in the Medical College at Calcutta, obtained sanction to construct experimental telegraph lines along the Hooghly from Calcutta to Diamond Harbour, with a branch from Bishtopur to Māyāpur and an extension from Kukrāhāti (on the farther side of the Hooghly) to Kedgeree, making, with some short additional sections, a total of 82 miles. In the same year, four offices (Calcutta, Māyāpur, Bishtopur and Diamond Harbour) were opened for business, which was principally connected with shipping, and two others (Kukrāhāti and Kedgeree) were added in February 1852. The receiving instrument was a small galvanoscope, designed by Dr. O'Shaughnessy and made in India, and this pattern continued in use until the Morse instrument replaced it early in 1857 . . . .

"The earliest telegraph line constructed in the neighbourhood of Calcutta (1851-52) comprised overhead and underground sections, and included the crossing of the Hooghly and Haldi rivers. The overhead portion consisted of an uninsulated iron rod conductor $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch in diameter and weighing 1,250 lbs. per mile, in lengths of $13\frac{1}{2}$ feet welded together end to end. It was supported on bamboos, 15 feet high and 200 to the mile, coated with coal-tar and pitch, and strengthened at intervals by posts, eight or ten to each mile, of teak, *sāl* (*Shorea robusta*), or iron-wood. The conductor was secured to the posts by means of strong iron clamps. The underground line used in Calcutta and its suburbs had a conductor similar to that of the overhead line, protected with two layers of Madras cloth saturated with melted pitch and tar, and laid in a row of roofing tiles filled with a melted mixture of sand and resin. The river cables were of English-made guttapercha-covered copper wire, which was secured for protection against dragging anchors, in the angle of a $\frac{7}{8}''$ iron chain cable. One of these cables was laid across the Hooghly (2,070 yards) at Diamond Harbour, and another across the Haldi (1,400 yards) at Kedgeree."

CHAPTER XI.

LAND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION.

ESTATES.

According to the returns for 1907-08, there are 2,729 permanently-settled estates, 203 temporarily-settled estates and 81 estates held direct by Government. The temporarily-settled estates extend over about one-eighth of the entire area of the district, and consist of four large parent estates comprising 23 entire *parganas*, principally situated in the south and east of the district, besides some small detached areas scattered here and there. The four large parent estates are Jalāmuthā, Majnāmuthā, Patāspur and Kalyānpur. At the time of the Permanent Settlement in 1793, the proprietors of the two estates of Jalāmuthā and Majnāmuthā refused to engage for their lands on any but temporary conditions, on account of their liability to inundations of salt water. A magnificent sea-dyke and a series of embankments now protect these estates from incursions of the sea, but they are liable to inundations from behind, and the outturn of the crops is not always assured. Patāspur, the third large temporarily-settled estate, which adjoins Orissa, was in possession of the Marāthās up to 1803. It was then ceded to the British and has never been permanently settled. The fourth large temporarily-settled estate is Kalyānpur on the west of the district, consisting of *taufir*, or excess, lands, *i.e.*, lands which by oversight escaped settlement in 1793. Another temporarily-settled estate is Balrāmpur *pargana* situated in the neighbourhood of Kharagpur, about 10 miles south of the town of Midnapore. This *pargana* was permanently settled in 1793, but was brought to sale in 1838 for arrears of revenue, and was purchased by Government in default of bidders.

It has always been recognized in this district that proprietors of temporarily-settled estates should be granted remissions or suspensions of revenue in times of inundations, droughts and other calamities resulting in loss of crops, the proprietors for their part being bound to allow their tenants to share in such remissions or suspensions.

Settlements.

The Patáspur *pargana* has been surveyed under the Bengal Survey Act, and a record-of-rights for the eighteen temporarily-settled estates which it comprises has been prepared under the Bengal Tenancy Act, a settlement being made for fifteen years with effect from 1897. The other temporarily-settled estates are now being surveyed, and a record-of-rights is being prepared. The principal estates under survey and settlement are the two temporarily-settled estates of Jalāmuthā and Majnāmuthā, situated in the Contai subdivision, both of which are under Government management. After the last settlement (made by Mr. J. C. Price in 1875-77) great difficulties were felt in realizing rents and in executing certificates owing to the record having become obsolete. A test survey of eight villages was made in 1897 in order to ascertain whether the maps and records required complete revision, and it was finally decided to make a fresh survey and settlement. The opportunity was taken to bring under the operations a number of other Government and temporarily-settled estates, where the terms of settlement had either expired or were about to expire. Several zamīndāri estates were also added to the programme; and now (1909) operations are in progress in 56 Government estates with an area of 600 square miles, as well as in 468 square miles comprised in zamīndāri estates.

Subdivision of estates.

There has been considerable subdivision of proprietary interests during the last half century. In 1850 the number of separate revenue-paying estates on the revenue roll was 2,561, while the number of registered proprietors and co-parceners was 4,735. In 1870 the number of such estates had increased to 2,808 and the number of registered proprietors and co-parceners to 6,358. At the present time the number of such estates is 3,013 and the number of registered proprietors and co-parceners is 20,405.

Revenue-paying estates.

For practical purposes the revenue-paying estates may be classified as follows:—(1) Old zamīndāris as settled at the Permanent Settlement in entire *parganas* or *tappas*. The number of zamīndārs holding such estates that were then brought upon the Collectorate records was only 29. (2) *Tāluks* which were treated as zamīndāris at the Permanent Settlement. (3) Other estates added subsequently under the Resumption laws. As regards the second class, it may be explained that *tāluks* were tenures which at the time of the Permanent Settlement were divided into two classes, viz., *huzuri* (or independent), and *mazkūrī* (or *shikmī*), *i.e.*, dependent. Independent *tāluks* paid their revenue to Government direct, being separated from the zamīndāris and entitled so to pay their revenue under the provisions of Regulation VIII of 1793; while dependent *tāluks* paid the revenue through a

zamīndār or other proprietor. Independent *tāluks* are classed with, and looked upon as, petty zamīndāris. They are not distinguished in the Collectorate registers from the regular zamīndāris, nor is there anything in those registers to show that they are of the character described in section 5, Regulation VIII of 1793. Dependent (*mazkūrī* or *shikmī*) *tāluks* of old times are scarcely to be found in this district. One such *tāluk* only can be traced in the records, viz., *tāluk* Jāmirāpāl, which is included in the Nayāgrām zamīndāri.

Among other *tāluks* which have been constituted estates, may be mentioned *nānkār tāluks*, *i.e.*, tracts of land originally exempted from assessment during the Mughal administration, being intended for the support of zamīndārs and their families. There are two large tenures of this sort in the district—one in *pargana* Midnapore called *nānkār* Ballabhpur, and another in *pargana* Majnāmuthā. Both of these have been brought under assessment, and are settled in perpetuity under Regulation VIII of 1793, paying their revenue direct to Government. There is also a third estate in the Patāspur *pargana* called *nānkār* Patāspur, which is not permanently settled but settled temporarily from time to time with the parent estate. *Nānkār tāluks.*

A curious class of estate consists of what are known as *jalpai* lands, *i.e.*, fuel lands, which are so called because they used to supply fuel for boiling brine when the manufacture of salt was carried on. They are situated in the south and south-east corner of the district within the Contai and Tamlūk subdivisions, and formerly comprised large tracts of jungle and waste land impregnated with salt. Before the acquisition of the district by the British, these lands were used for the manufacture of salt by agents called *mālāngīs*. In 1781 the East India Company deprived the zamīndārs of the right to manufacture salt and established a Salt Department, which took possession of the *jalpai* lands. Under this arrangement, the *jalpai* lands, which were originally integral parts of private estates, seem to have been held by the Salt Department free of rent under a perpetual title of occupancy. As compensation for the loss of profits on salt-making the zamīndārs received an allowance called *mushāharā*. The amounts so paid were fluctuating till 1794, when an annual sum was fixed, since known as *khālāri* rent: *khālāri* is a Bengali word meaning a salt bed or a place where salt is made. The lands were then farmed out by Government, and, for the purposes of the land revenue accounts, separate *tauzi* numbers were assigned to them. The lands subsequently became the property of Government under the provisions of Regulation I of 1824, and their area is *Jalpai lands.*

about 120 square miles. There are at present 187 estates of *jalpai* lands bearing distinct numbers on the district revenue roll.

Even after Government abandoned the salt monopoly (in 1863), it continued to pay, and still pays, the *khālāri* rents to the zamīndārs. From the judgment delivered by the Privy Council in the case *Secretary of State* v. *Rānī Anandmayī Devī* (I.L.R., 8 Cal., 95) it appears that the *khālāri* rent paid by Government to the proprietors was properly speaking a remission of revenue and that Government had an absolute right to settle these lands with whomsoever it pleased, subject to the payment of *khālāri* rent to the proprietors of the estates to which they originally belonged, or the grant of a remission of revenue proportionate to the area of which the proprietor had lost possession.

TENURES.

The following is a brief account of the different tenures found in Midnapore:

Aimās.

Elsewhere the tenures known as *āimās* are tenures granted rent-free, or subject to a small quit-rent, to learned or pious Musalmāns, or for religious or charitable uses connected with the Muhammadan faith. No such *āimās* seem to exist in this district. The tenures known by this name in Midnapore consist of lands granted for the purpose of clearing jungle, or for the improvement of the land, free of rent, or subject to small rents for the first few years and assessable subsequently at progressive or fixed rents. The *āimās* are mostly found in the Balarāmpur estate, which was purchased by Government in 1837 at a sale for arrears of revenue. In 1875, when the estate came under resettlement, the *āimādārs*, who would not agree to the terms offered them by the Settlement Officer, were set aside, and the settlement was made with the tenants immediately below them. Litigation ensued, and the *āimādārs* were declared by the Civil Court to be ryots having a right of occupancy. The settlement was then concluded with the *āimādārs*, leaving them to settle with their under-ryots. The rights accorded with the sanction of the Civil Court were agreed to, but it cannot be denied that they were less than the privileges claimed and that the settlement was the reverse of acceptable to those most affected by it. Subsequently, however, in 1904 during the resettlement of the estate (now in progress) the question of the status of the *āimādārs* was referred to the Board of Revenue, and it was decided that they are tenure-holders within the meaning of the Bengal Tenancy Act.

Kamdura tenures.

Kamdura tenures are lands granted by zamīndārs previous to the Permanent Settlement, avowedly at rates lower than the prevailing rates, either as marks of favour or for jungle-clearing. In the settlements of the parent estates made under the Permanent

Settlement rules these rates were allowed to stand good, and the tenures were assessed accordingly, and settled dependently on the parent estates. Such tenures are hereditary and transferable.

Panchakī tenures. *Panchakī* tenures are of a similar nature, being patches of land granted before the Permanent Settlement, and assessed at low rates. These tenures were then, as now, called *panchakī*, the word *panchak* meaning quit-rent. They are chiefly to be met with in Bāgri *pargana*, where they are permanently settled (dependently on their parent estates) at the original low rates of assessment. *Peshkashi* is also the denomination of a tenure held at a quit-rent. These tenures are similar to the *kamdura* tenures above-mentioned, and were recognized and settled in the same way.

Patnīs. *Patnī tāluks* are a species of permanent tenures which originated in the estates of the Rājā of Burdwān after 1793 and thence spread to other parts of the Province. They are governed by the provisions of Regulation VIII of 1819, known as the Patnī Sale Law, which declared the validity of such permanent tenures, defined the relative rights of the zamīndārs and their subordinate *patnī tālukdārs*, established a summary process for the sale of such tenures in satisfaction of the zamīndār's demand of rent, and legalized under-letting, on similar terms, by the *patnīdārs* and others. Since the passing of this law the *patnī* form of tenure has been very popular with zamīndārs who wish to divest themselves of the direct management of their property, or part of it, or who wish to raise money in the shape of a bonus.

It may be described as a tenure created by the zamīndār to be held by the lessee and his heirs or transferees for ever at a rent fixed in perpetuity, subject to the liability of annulment on sale of the parent estate for arrears of the Government revenue, unless protected against the rights exercisable by auction-purchasers by common or special registry, as prescribed by sections 37 and 39 of Act XI of 1859. The tenant is called upon to furnish collateral security for the rent and for his conduct generally, or he is excused from this obligation at the zamīndār's discretion. The main condition in the lease is that, in the event of an arrear occurring, the tenure may be sold by the zamīndār; and if the sale-proceeds do not cover the arrear, the other property of the defaulting *patnīdār* is liable for it. *Patnīdārs* may under-let, but such leases are not binding on the zamīndārs in the event of the tenure being sold for arrears.

Under-tenures created by *patnīdārs* are called *darpatnī*, and those created by *darpatnīdārs* are called *sepatnī* tenures. These under-tenures are, like the parent tenures, permanent, transferable and hereditable; and they have generally the same rights,

privileges and responsibilities attached to them. They are usually granted on payment of a bonus.

Istimrārī tāluks. *Istimrārī tāluks* are farms, or leases, granted in perpetuity at a stipulated rent or at a quit-rent. These tenures are hereditary and transferable, and are not resumable by the grantors.

Ijārā is the common term for leases of lands to middlemen, who come in between the proprietors and the actual cultivators. The lands are leased at specified rates of rent, and ordinarily for limited periods. This district teems with *ijārādāri* tenures; and as *ijārādārs* holding short leases frequently sub-let their farms, *darijārās* or sub-leases are also common.

Ijārā zarpeshgī signifies a temporary lease or *ijārā* granted on receipt of an advance (*peshgī*) from the lessee, the proprietor's right of re-entry at the expiration of the term being contingent on the repayment or liquidation of the advance. Leases of this description are often granted in Midnapore, chiefly by indebted landholders.

Katkina ijārā is the denomination of a temporary lease, or sub-lease, granted by the proprietor or farmer or under-farmer at a rack rent. The lessees in such cases are ordinarily bound to pay the rents engaged for by them without raising objection on the score of non-collection or insufficient collection from the lands leased. Leases of this kind are to be met with everywhere throughout Midnapore.

Mandali tenures. In the more jungly tracts there is a special class of tenure-holders termed *mandals*. They were originally substantial ryots, called *ābādkars*, who undertook to bring a tract of waste land under cultivation paying the zamīndār a stipulated sum as rent. These *ābādkars* then reclaimed the land, either themselves or with the help of other ryots, whom they induced to settle with them; established a village, to which they usually gave their name; and being heads of the settlements, were called *mandals*, or headmen. The zamīndār and the *mandal* from time to time re-adjust the terms of their bargain, but the former does not interfere between the *mandal* and his under-tenants. In the settlement proceedings of 1839 these *mandals* were declared to have only the right of *sthāni* or *khudkāsht* ryots, and not to be entitled to any *munafā* or profit. Though not exactly recognized as *tālukdārs*, they gradually acquired rights superior to those of ordinary *khudkāsht* ryots; and as they were left to make their own terms with the ryots settled by them, they must have had a very considerable profit besides what they obtained from any land cultivated by themselves. Their *mandali* rights became transferable by custom, and when at subsequent settlements they

came into immediate contact with Government, though not recognized as regular *tālukdārs*, they were held entitled to consideration. The Government in settlement proceedings deducted 15 per cent. from the gross *jamā* in their favour, and after some demur they accepted this as a sufficient recognition of their status.

In 1906-07 the status of the *mandals* in *pargana* Kalyānpur and the allowance to be given to them were decided during the re-settlement of that *pargana*. Those *mandals* who were found to be middlemen were given an allowance of 20 per cent. to be distributed between them and the subordinate tenure-holders (if any), but the allowance was raised to 30 and 35 per cent. in cases in which the tenure-holder had been treated more or less as a ryot at the last settlement.

RENT-FREE LANDS.

In Midnapore, as in other districts, *lākhirāj* is a common name for revenue-free or rent-free tenures. Many such tenures were created during the Muhammadan rule, the grantees being entitled to hold lands exempt from payment of revenue in perpetuity or for life only. Such grants were occasionally made by the Emperors and the local Governors for the support of the families of persons who had performed public services, for religious or charitable purposes, and for maintaining troops, etc. More often they were made by the zamīndārs, and even by officers of the Muhammadan Government appointed to the temporary superintendence of the revenue, under the pretext that the produce of the lands was to be appropriated to religious or charitable purposes, while in fact the alienations were made for the personal advantage of the grantees, or, clandestinely, of the grantors themselves. No effective measures to check these malpractices seem to have been adopted until 1793. By Regulation XIX of that year, only such of the *hukūmi* grants (*i.e.*, grants made by zamīndārs, etc., as above stated) were declared to be valid as were made before the 12th August 1765, the date of the Company's accession to the *dīwāni*, provided that the grantees obtained possession previous to the above date, and that the lands were not subsequently rendered subject to the payment of revenue by competent authority. All grants made after the above date, but previous to 1790, were deemed valid only if confirmed by Government or any officer empowered to confirm them; but all lands of an area not exceeding 10 *bighās* (3⅓ acres) granted for religious purposes, which were *bonâ fide* appropriated to those purposes, were exempted from assessment. By Regulation XXXVII of 1793, all royal grants for holding lands exempt from the payment of revenue, made previous to the 12th August 1765, were declared valid if the

grantees obtained possession of the lands so granted previous to that date, and if the grants had not been subsequently resumed by competent authority. Other grants made subsequent to the 12th August 1765 were deemed valid only if confirmed by Government, or by any officer empowered to confirm them.

Bahāli lākhirāj. All *lākhirāj* lands, which were exempted from payment of revenue under the provisions of the Regulations above-mentioned, or on the principles laid down in them, are called *bahāli lākhirāj* (*i.e.*, confirmed *lākhirāj*) in Midnapore. The *lākhirāj* tenures created for religious and charitable purposes are called *debottar*, *brahmottar*, *wakf*, etc., as detailed below.

Debottar. *Debottar* are rent-free lands the proceeds of which are appropriated to the worship and support of Hindu idols and temples. The ordinary method of making such grants is to dedicate certain property to an idol or to a temple; and this endowment is thenceforth called *debottar* property. As soon as the lands have been so dedicated, the rights of the donor lapse; he cannot alienate them, and his heirs cannot inherit them. *Debottar* tenures seem to be most frequent in the southern and eastern parts of the district, and nearly all seem to be appropriated to the support of family idols, the management of the property being retained by the donors or their families.

Brahmottar. *Brahmottar* lands are lands granted rent-free to Brāhmans for their support, and that of their descendants, either as a reward for their sanctity or learning, or to enable them to devote themselves to religious duties. The pious object with which such grants were made in old times did not continue in force in later periods, when fraudulent grants were often made to Brāhmans from other considerations and with other motives. *Brahmottar* lands are more numerous in the Hijilī portion of the district than elsewhere.

Other rent-free lands. *Vaishnavottar* are lands granted rent-free for the support of Vaishnava devotees. *Mahattrān* lands are rent-free estates granted to persons of respectability. *Khushbāsh* lands are those granted rent-free to persons as sites for dwelling-houses, etc. *Bhātottar* are lands granted rent-free to *bhāts* or bards. *Ganakottar* are lands granted to *ganaks*, or fortune-tellers, astrologers and genealogists. *Sanyāsottar* are rent-free lands granted for the support of *sanyāsīs* or religious ascetics.

Wakf. *Wakf* lands are rent-free lands appropriated for Muhammadan religious or charitable purposes. Like the *debottar* lands of Hindus, *wakf* lands are neither liable for the debts of the testator, whose proprietary rights cease after the completion of the endowment, nor alienable, though transferable temporarily for

the preservation or benefit of the endowment or the mosque. It has been held that if the property is wholly *wakf*, *i.e.*, if all the profits are devoted exclusively to religious and charitable purposes, the *mutāwalli*, or superintendent of the endowment, having only a life interest, is incompetent to grant leases for a longer period than the term of his own life; but if the office is hereditary, and the *mutāwalli* has a beneficial interest in the property, it has been held that the property must be considered heritable, burdened with a certain trust. *Madad-māsh* are lands granted rent-free for the support of learned or pious Muhammadans. *Pīrottar* are lands granted rent-free for the support of the tombs of *pīrs*, *i.e.*, saints and other holy men of the Muhammadan faith. *Nazrat* lands are presents made in land for religious purposes.

SERVICE TENURES.

Another class of tenures in Midnapore consists of lands granted rent-free, or at a quit-rent, in return for military or other service performed by the grantee.

***Paikān* lands.**

The most interesting of the service tenures are those called *paikān*, or *paik jāgīr*, because they consist of lands held by *paiks*. These *paiks* formerly constituted a frontier militia, their services being remunerated by grants of land, which they held at quit-rents or free of all rent. Large bands of them used to be kept up by the *zamīndārs* and jungle chiefs for the purposes of aggression and defence, and the *paiks* were also responsible for maintaining order within their estates. After British rule was established, they were retained for police duties, the relative positions of the Government, the *zamīndār* and the *paiks* being as follows. The *zamīndār* was responsible to Government for the efficient service of the *paiks*. He was entitled to appoint them, giving preference to heirs of old incumbents if they were qualified for the duty, and to dismiss them for incompetence or misconduct, and make over their lands to others. The *paiks* on their part were responsible to the *zamīndār*.

The *paikān* lands generally consisted of blocks from 2 to 13 acres each, although in some cases in *pargana* Midnapore *paiks* are said to have been in possession of from 66 to 133 acres each of service land of this description. In February 1796, the area of *paikān* lands in Midnapore was returned at 33,350 acres, and in 1866 the total area, as ascertained by a special inquiry conducted by Mr. D. J. McNeile, C. S., was 28,115 acres. These lands were chiefly situated in the wilder tracts to the north and west of the district rather than in the southern or eastern parts, and were most frequently met with in *parganas* Midnapore, Manohargarh, Bhanjbhūm, Bāgri and Brāhmanbhūm.

This system failed to secure an efficient police force. In some parts of the district there was a large number of useless *paiks* collected together in one place, while in the adjacent villages there were no police at all. The *paiks* were held not to be under any obligation to do *chaukīdārs'* work, and when compelled to do it, did it very badly. From time to time, therefore, proposals for the resumption of the *paikān* lands were made by the local officers, but they were not sanctioned by Government owing to doubt whether it could lawfully resume such tenures. At length, in 1883, the Magistrate reported that the Rājā of Midnapore, the zamīndār of several large *parganas* containing extensive *paikān* lands, was willing to have them resumed on certain conditions, and Government, after consulting the Board of Revenue, sanctioned the necessary negotiations. Long and intricate discussions followed, which it is not necessary to relate here. Ultimately, in 1887, the transaction was brought to a close. It may be briefly described as follows.

The *paiks* are tenants-at-will removable by Government and the zamīndār for neglect of duty. They hold their lands practically rent-free, paying to the zamīndār an almost nominal quit-rent, or *peshkash*. Thus, the quit-rent paid for 1,822 *bighās* in the Keshpur thāna was Rs. 886 yearly, or less than 8 annas a *bighā*. An enquiry was made to ascertain what was the all-round letting rate of these lands, and one rupee a *bighā* was fixed upon. From this were deducted the *peshkash* and 12½ per cent. collection charges; half the remainder was fixed as the revenue payable by the zamīndār and added to his *sadar jamā*. On these terms he was allowed to dismiss the *paiks* and take possession of the land. The Chaukīdāri Act was then introduced into the villages of the Keshpur thāna, which had previously been left to be guarded, or not guarded, as they pleased, by the useless and unmanageable *paiks*. In sanctioning these arrangements Government directed that the system should be introduced into other parts of the district with the concurrence of the zamīndārs; and since then the service lands of the *paiks* have been gradually resumed and they themselves enlisted on regular pay under the Chaukīdāri Act.

Patwārī jāgīrs. *Patwārī jāgīrs* are lands assigned to *patwārīs*, or village accountants, in lieu of wages; but such tenures are only met with in Patāspur *pargana*. The *patwārīs* have no proprietary right in the land, which is only held on condition of service in lieu of salary.

Arzī piyādā jāgīrs. *Arzī piyādā jāgīrs* are service tenures peculiar to Midnapore. Peons attached to the Collector's office hold revenue-free

lands in lieu of salary, and these lands are called by the name *ārzī piyādā jāgīr.* The tenure was created by a Muhammadan Governor, who in the year 1095 Amlī granted a *sanad* to one Sheikh Banjā, giving him certain lands revenue-free in perpetuity, in order to bring the soil under cultivation. The grantee in return performed certain ceremonial services, attended with eleven *chobdārs* on the Governor at Midnapore, and performed other duties connected with his Court. A deed for the land was subsequently obtained from Mr Young, the Superintendent of *Bāze Zamīn Daftar*, in 1786, and the grantee continued to attend the Collector of the district with eleven *chobdārs* as before. Attempts were made to resume these lands; but the Board, in its letters dated the 22nd May 1798 and 6th April 1842, prohibited their resumption on the part of Government, and they have since been held by the peons free of revenue in lieu of salary. The original deed was for 166 acres, but the quantity of land mentioned in that granted by Mr. Young seems to be 125 acres, and the actual quantity in the possession of the *piyādās* is 138 acres, situated in *parganas* Kharagpur and Midnapore.

Daftrī jāgīr. *Daftrī jāgīr* is a plot of land, consisting of 7 acres, held as a service tenure by the *daftrī* of the Midnapore Collector's office. The tenure seems to have been first created during the Muhammadan rule, when the *daftrī* employed in the Revenue Court (*tahsīldāri kachahri*) at Khāndār had the lands in question assigned to him in lieu of salary. The grantee was continued in possession of the lands by the English; but subsequently the tenure was transferred to the *daftrī* of the Collector's office. The original deed for the lands is not forthcoming, and no record exists to show why the *daftrī* was remunerated in land in lieu of money.

Matmen's jāgīr. Another curious service holding is the matmen's *jāgir*, which comprises 214 *bighās* of land in twelve villages and is so called because the tenants who hold it supply mats to the District Officer of Midnapore in lieu of rent. It originated in the year 1744 A.D. with a grant made by the Nawāb Alī Vardi Khān to three persons named Kuar, Sarbeswar and Kunjo Chaudhri. After the death of the original grantees, their relative Sītārām Chaudhri claimed the lands, and as he was found in possession of them, the grant was confirmed and a new *sanad* granted in 1784. In 1850 a dispute having arisen amongst the matmen, an agreement was taken from them, by which they undertook to supply 42 large and 360 small mats; subsequently the number of mats to be supplied was reduced to 100. In 1879 the lands held by the matmen were registered under orders of the Board

of Revenue as a Government estate under the name of Kanakpur on the ground that Government received the mats as rent in kind. Since then it has continued to be a Government estate with a demand fluctuating according to the amount realized from the sale-proceeds of the mats.

Other service tenures.

Behārā jāgīr, *nāpit jāgīr* and *kumhār jāgīr* are other service tenures. Lands granted rent-free by zamīndārs, etc., to *pālki*-bearers are called *behārā jāgīrs;* those granted to barbers are called *nāpit jāgīrs;* and those granted to *kumhārs* (earthen-pot-makers) are called *kumhār jāgīrs.* These tenures are held on condition of service by the former two classes, and of supplying pots, (generally to *thākurbārīs, i.e.* temples), by the latter. Such tenures, and others of the kind, exist more or less in almost all large zamīndāris.

CHAPTER XII.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

THE administration of the district is in charge of the Collector and District Magistrate, who is also *ex-officio* Assistant to the Superintendent of the Tributary Mahāls, Cuttack, and has the powers of a Revenue Superintendent of Canals in the Howrah district. During the last few years an additional District Magistrate has been appointed, who has relieved the District Magistrate of some of his ordinary work. For general administrative purposes the district is divided into four subdivisions with head-quarters at Midnapore, Ghātāl, Tamlūk and Contai. In the head-quarters subdivision, which is under the direct supervision of the Collector, the regular staff consists of six Deputy Collectors, besides two or three Sub-Deputy Collectors and a special Deputy Collector for excise. The other subdivisions are in charge of Subdivisional Officers, of whom the Subdivisional Officer of Tamlūk is generally assisted by a Sub-Deputy Collector, while at Contai there is a second Deputy Collector for the management of *khās mahāls*. The canals and embankments in the centre and east of the district are in charge of an Executive Engineer of the Public Works Department, whose charge is known as the Cossye Division, while those in the south along the sea-board are included in the Contai subdivision, and those along the Hooghly estuary in the Etamogra subdivision of the Balasore Division. ADMINISTRATIVE CHARGES AND STAFF.

The revenue of the district, under the main heads, increased from Rs. 31,01,000 in 1880-81, when the income-tax had not been imposed, to Rs. 34,95,000 in 1890-91 and to Rs. 37,36,000 in 1900-01. In 1907-08 it further increased to Rs. 41,49,474, of which Rs. 23,45,080 were derived from land revenue, Rs. 9,29,125 from stamps, Rs. 4,39,752 from excise, Rs. 3,55,472 from cesses and Rs. 82,045 from income-tax. REVENUE.

The collections of land revenue rose from Rs. 22,45,000 in 1880-81 to Rs. 24,34,000 in 1890-91, but fell again to Rs. 22,40,000 in 1900-01. In 1907-08 they amounted to Rs. 23,45,080 collected from 3,013 estates, the current demand being Rs. 24,49,385. Of these estates, 2,729 with a current demand of Rs. 18,91,399 are permanently settled, and 203 with a demand of Rs. 88,708 are temporarily settled, while there are 81 estates with a demand of Rs. 4,69,278 held direct by Government. The Land revenue.

demand is larger than in any other district of the Province except Burdwān, and is equivalent to 36 per cent. of the reported gross rental of the district.

Stamps. The revenue derived from the sale of stamps was Rs. 5,55,000 in 1895-96, and averaged Rs. 6,44,000 per annum in the quinquennium ending in 1899-1900. During the five years ending in 1904-05 the annual receipts averaged Rs. 7,64,000, and in 1907-08 they were Rs. 9,29,125, as against Rs. 6,93,877 in 1897-98, the sale of judicial stamps accounting for Rs. 7,37,424 or nearly four-fifths of the total amount. The sale of court-fee stamps is by far the most important item in the receipts from judicial stamps, realizing Rs. 6,78,408 in 1907-08 as compared with Rs. 5,01,844 in 1897-98. Here, as elsewhere, the revenue derived from non-judicial stamps has not grown as rapidly, rising in the same period from Rs. 1,57,200 to Rs. 1,91,700. Of the latter sum impressed stamps accounted for Rs. 1,84,480 as against Rs. 1,51,200 ten years previously.

Excise. The next most important source of revenue is excise, the receipts from which increased from Rs. 3,21,370 in 1897-98 to Rs. 4,37,752 in 1907-08, the net excise revenue being Rs. 1,455 per 10,000 of the population as against the Provincial average of Rs. 3,206 per 10,000. Nearly half of this sum was obtained from the sale of opium, which realized Rs. 2,03,856 in 1907-08. The people of Midnapore have long been addicted to the use of opium, and in the year referred to the consumption of the drug was greater than in any district in Bengal except Cuttack and Balasore. There were 114 shops licensed for retail sale, *i.e.*, one shop to every 24,466 persons. The aggregate amount realized from duty and license fees represented Rs. 730 for every 10,000 of the population, as compared with the average of Rs. 548 for the whole Province.

After opium, the largest receipts are obtained from the manufacture and sale of country spirit, which is carried on under the contract supply system, which was introduced in 1905. Under this system the local manufacture of country spirit has been prohibited, and a contract has been made with firms of distillers for its supply. The spirit is brought from the distillery to the various depôts, and is there blended and reduced to certain fixed strengths, at which alone it may be supplied to retail vendors and sold by the latter to the public.

The receipts from duty and license-fees on this spirit are less than in any other district in the Burdwān Division except Burdwān and Hooghly, amounting in 1907-08 to Rs. 1,36,990. There were in that year 76 shops licensed for its retail sale, *i.e.*, one retail shop for every 68 square miles and 34,251 of

the population, the annual consumption being 12 proof gallons per 1,000 of the population. The sale of the fermented liquor known as *tāri* brought in only Rs. 11,399, while the receipts from *pachwai* or rice beer, which is specially drunk by the aboriginals, amounted to Rs. 15,118 in the same year. The average receipts from both spirits and fermented liquor amounted to Rs. 615 per 10,000 as compared with Rs. 1,616 for the Burdwān Division and Rs. 2,298 for the whole of Bengal, while the incidence of taxation was only 9 pies per head.

There is no great demand for *gānja*, *i.e.*, the unimpregnated dried flowering tops of the cultivated female hemp plant (*Cannabis Indica*), and the resinous exudation on them; the amount realized from the duty and license-fees was Rs. 55,921 in 1907-08. The total incidence of the revenue accruing from hemp drugs was only Rs. 217 for every 10,000, and the number of shops licensed to sell by retail was one to every 23,437 persons.

Road and public works cesses are, as usual, levied at the maximum rate of one anna in the rupee. The total collections increased from Rs. 3,23,853 in 1897-98 to Rs. 3,55,472 in 1907-08. The current demand in the latter year was Rs. 3,63,531, of which the greater part (Rs. 3,26,833) was due from 6,278 revenue-paying estates. Rupees 24,343 were due from 2,947 revenue-free estates, while Rs. 12,355 were payable by 2,218 rent-free lands. The number of recorded share-holders of estates was 44,818. There were 72,086 tenures assessed to cesses with 108,220 share-holders; the number of tenures was thus more than six times that of estates. The total demand of cesses (Rs. 4,11,227) was equal to nearly a sixth of the demand of land revenue (Rs. 26,15,502). Cesses.

In 1896-97 the income-tax yielded Rs. 76,568 paid by 3,918 assessees, and in 1901-02 the amount derived from the tax had increased to Rs. 97,393 and the number of assessees to 4,953. At that time the minimum income assessable was Rs. 500, but this was raised to Rs. 1,000 in 1903, thereby affording relief to a number of petty traders, money-lenders and clerks. The number of assessees consequently fell in 1903-04 to 1,417, the net collections being Rs. 75,451. In 1907-08 the tax brought in Rs. 82,045 paid by 1,574 assessees. Income-tax.

There are 24 offices for the registration of assurances under Act III of 1877. At Midnapore the District Sub-Registrar deals, as usual, with the documents presented there and assists the additional District Magistrate, who is *ex-officio* District Registrar, in supervising the proceedings of the Sub-Registrars in charge of the other registration offices. Registration.

In the five years 1895—1899 the average number of documents registered annually was 73,004; in the next quinquennium (1900—1904) it increased to 85,835; and in 1907 the number rose to 90,674, as shown in the marginal statement, which gives the salient statistics for that year. This increase is attributed to the settlement of *chaukīdāri chākrān* lands by the Midnapore Zamīndāri Company, to the settlements made by other zamīndārs, and to the fact that some holders of *debottar* lands, being unable to sell them legally, granted perpetual leases on handsome premia reserving nominal annual rents.

Offices.	Documents registered.	Receipts.	Expenditure.
		Rs.	Rs.
Midnapore	4,584	13,318	9,442
Agra Patna ...	3,210	3,454	1,580
Contai	5,783	6,481	3,017
Contai, joint (Marisdah)	2,558	3,400	1,229
Contai, second joint (Bāsudebpur).	1,762	1,955	1,511
Dāntan ...	5,275	4,809	1,984
Debrā	2,566	2,497	1,389
Garhbetā	4,023	4,461	1,878
Gopīballabhpur ...	2,288	1,832	1,368
Ghātāl	3,678	3,670	2,202
Jara	3,097	3,302	1,597
Kājlāgar	5,407	6,328	1,698
Keshpur (Anandapur) ...	3,278	3,879	1,921
Kherī	2,960	3,408	1,287
Kukrāhāti	3,339	4,140	1,689
Lodhāsuli at Jhargrām ...	2,320	2,362	1,925
Mahishādal ...	3,496	4,173	1,924
Nandigrām ...	6,197	7,618	2,625
Nārāyangarh ...	2,823	3,022	1,635
Pānskurā	5,672	5,246	2,308
Patāspur	3,700	3,917	1,596
Rāmnagar	3,815	3,686	1,735
Sābang (Pinglā) ...	3,950	4,288	1,908
Tamlūk	4,893	5,469	2,340
Total ..	90,674	1,06,805	51,788

JUDICIAL STAFF.

The district is within the jurisdiction of the District and Sessions Judge of Midnapore. The subordinate civil judicial officers are:—two Subordinate Judges at Midnapore, four Munsifs at the same place, three Munsifs at Contai, two Munsifs at Ghātāl, four Munsifs at Tamlūk, and one Munsif at Garhbetā. At Midnapore criminal justice is administered by the District Magistrate, by the Additional District Magistrate, by six Deputy Magistrates of whom four are Magistrates with first-class powers, while two are Magistrates of the second or third class, and by the Sub-Deputy Magistrates, who also have second or third class powers. The Subdivisional Officers of Ghātāl, Tamlūk and Contai are almost invariably Magistrates of the first class; there is also, as a rule, a Deputy Magistrate at Contai and a Sub-Deputy Magistrate at Tamlūk, both with second-class powers. Besides these stipendiary Magistrates, there are Benches of Honorary Magistrates at

Midnapore, Ghātāl, Tamlūk, Contai and Chandrakonā, as well as an Honorary Magistrate at Jara and another at Dāntan.

Crime.

Midnapore has long been notorious for the number of dacoities committed within its borders. These are largely the work of Lodhās, an aboriginal tribe mainly found in the Nārāyangarh and neighbouring thānas, and of Tuntiās, a Muhammadan caste, whose traditional occupation is the cultivation of the mulberry tree (*tunt*) for feeding silk-worms. This occupation having become unprofitable, many of them have taken to criminal courses, and are professional thieves and dacoits. Steps have been taken to break up a number of gangs which were found to have formed in the district, two of which had 246 members between them. Another gang, known as the Calcutta-Midnapore gang of swindlers and blackmailers, is referred to as follows in the Report on the Administration of the Police in 1907 :—" This was a gang formed for the purpose of engineering false, civil and criminal cases against persons whose enemies desired to harass them. The leader had his head-quarters in Calcutta, where he maintained a regular office of business. His myrmidons lived some in Calcutta and some in Midnapore, the district from which the large majority of his clients hailed. His *modus operandi* in the institution of criminal cases was as follows. On an application being made by some one wishing to put an enemy into trouble, he with his accomplices would go to some distant district and give out that he had come on business with money to make purchases. One of the gang would assume the name of the man who was to be harassed and play the part of a servant. After some days he would disappear, on which the leader or one of his companions would proceed to lodge information against him, alleging that he had absconded with certain money which had been entrusted to him. The address of the absconder given would be the address of the victim they wished to harass, whose arrest would naturally follow."

Police.

For police purposes the district is divided into thānas, outposts, road-posts and beat-houses as shown below :—

Sadar Subdivision—
A Division.

Midnapore (Khasphari, Nutanbazar, Patnabazar and Habibpur town out-posts).
Keshpur.
Sālbani.

Contai Subdivision.

Contai.
Bahiri.
Bāsudebpur.
Rāmnagar.
Egrā.
Patāspur.

Sadar Subdivision—
A Division—concld.

Garhbetā (Goāltor and Chandrakonā road posts).
Debrā.

B Division.

Kharagpur.
Sābang.
Pinglā.
Nārāyangarh (Belda road post).
Kesiāri.

C Division.

Dāntan.
Mohanpur.
Jhargrām.
Binpur (Simlā road post).
Gopīballabhpur.
Nayāgrām

Contai Subdivision—concld.

Khejuri.
Bhagwānpur.
Henria.

Tamlūk Subdivision.

Tamlūk (Tamlūk town out-post).
Maynā.
Pānskurā (Kolā road post).
Maslandpur.
Geonkhāli.
Sutāhātā.
Nandigrām.

Ghātāl Subdivision.

Ghātāl (Ghātal and Kharār town outposts).
Dāspur.
Chandrakonā (Chandrakonā and Khirpai town outposts).
Rāmjibanpur (Rāmjibanpur town outpost and Inda beat-house).

The regular police force consisted in 1907 of the District Superintendent of Police, a Deputy Superintendent of Police, 9 inspectors, 77 sub-inspectors, 1 sergeant, 83 head-constables and 773 constables, including 4 men employed in river patrols. The total strength of the force was therefore 944 men, representing one policeman to every 5·4 square miles and to every 2,954 of the population. There is also a small body of town *chaukīdārs* enrolled under the Police Act in the municipalities. The Chaukīdāri Act, VI (B.C.) of 1870, has been extended to all parts of the district with the exception of three thānas, Gopīballabhpur, Jhargrām and Binpur, in which it has only been introduced into a few small and scattered villages. These thānas, which lie to the west of the district and have a population mostly of Santāls, are reported to be not suited to the introduction of the Act. Many of the *chaukīdārs* in this part of the district are still remunerated by service lands. They are successors of the *paiks*, or foot soldiers, who were retained by the zamīndārs of former times as a defence against the incursions of Marāthās and hill robbers. Their service lands are being gradually resumed,

and they are being enlisted on regular pay under the Chaukīdāri Act. In 1907 the rural police force consisted of 493 *daffadārs* and 6,239 *chaukīdārs*, of whom 5,793 were *chaukīdārs* under Act VI (B.C.) of 1879, while 59 were under Regulation XX of 1817, and 387 were *chākrān chaukīdārs* remunerated by grants of land. There was one *chaukīdār* to every 447 inhabitants.

There is a District and Central jail at Midnapore, *i.e.*, it is used both as a Central jail and as a District jail. A Central jail, it may be explained, is intended for the confinement of persons sentenced to long terms of imprisonment, *i.e.*, convicts sentenced to more than two years' imprisonment are transferred to it from other jails. As a District jail it is used for the imprisonment of persons sentenced at Midnapore and of those transferred from the subsidiary jails at the subdivisional head-quarters, as well as for the detention of local under-trial prisoners. This jail had, in 1908, accommodation for 1,012 prisoners distributed as follows. There were barracks for 641 male convicts, 27 female convicts, 40 under-trial prisoners and 8 civil prisoners; there were cells for 220 convicts, while the hospital had accommodation for 76 prisoners. The industries carried on in the jail are chiefly aloe-pounding, coir-pounding and coir-mat-making, cotton-weaving and the manufacture of prison clothing, dusters, *pardāhs*, *darīs* and cotton carpets, cane chairs and tables. A bakery is also worked. JAILS.

There are subsidiary jails at Ghātāl, Tamlūk and Contai, *i.e.*, lock-ups in which under-trial prisoners and prisoners sentenced to less than 14 days' imprisonment are confined, other prisoners being transferred to the Midnapore jail. The sub-jail at Ghātāl has accommodation for 20 under-trial prisoners (18 males and 2 females) and that at Tamlūk for 15 (12 male and 3 female) convicts, while the sub-jail at Contai has accommodation for 37 prisoners, viz., 13 male and 2 female convicts and 22 male under-trial prisoners.

CHAPTER XIII.

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT.

DISTRICT BOARD. OUTSIDE municipal areas the administration of local affairs, such as the maintenance of roads, bridges, ferries and pounds, the control of village sanitation and water-supply, the provision of medical relief, and a general supervision over Primary and Middle schools, rests with the District Board, assisted by Local Boards, which have been constituted for each of the subdivisions, and by the Union Committees of Contai, Jara, Pānskurā and Pinglā. The District Board consists of 25 members, of whom 12 are elected, 7 are nominated, and 6 are *ex-officio* members. According to the returns for 1907-08, Government servants and pleaders or *mukhtārs* predominate, each class representing 32 per cent. of the members, while the land-holding classes represent 28 per cent.

Income. The average annual income of the District Board during the 10 years ending in 1901-02 was Rs. 2,53,000, of which Rs. 1,51,000 were derived from the road cess. In 1907-08 the opening balance was Rs. 2,45,015, and the income of the year aggregated Rs. 3,17,750, including Rs. 1,77,528 realized from the road cess, Rs. 48,921 contributed from Provincial revenues, and Rs. 69,691 obtained from civil works, of which Rs. 11,389 were obtained from tolls on ferries, while Rs. 12,187 were realized from the lease of pounds: the number of ferries and pounds was 20 and 180, respectively. Here, as elsewhere, the road cess is the principal source of income, but the incidence of taxation is light, being only one anna per head of the population—a proportion lower than in any other district in the Burdwān Division except Bānkurā.

Expenditure. The average annual expenditure during the decade ending in 1901-02 was Rs. 2,52,000, of which Rs. 1,55,000 were spent on civil works, Rs. 61,000 on education, and Rs. 3,000 on medical relief. In 1907-08 the expenditure amounted to Rs. 3,55,326, of which nearly three-fourths (Rs. 2,55,139) was spent on civil works, while education accounted for Rs. 68,535 and medical relief for Rs. 11,016. The heaviest charge on the income of the District Board is the maintenance of communications; it now (1909) maintains 384½ miles of metalled roads and 358 miles

of unmetalled roads, besides a number of village tracks with a total length of 756 miles; the cost of maintaining these roads in 1907-08 was Rs. 258, Rs. 25 and Rs. 18 per mile, respectively. Special attention has been given to the extension and improvement of railway feeder roads since the construction of the railway. During 1907-08 one feeder road was completed and three were under construction, on one of which, viz., the road from Dāntan to Gopīballabhpur, the Board spent Rs. 22,465. The Board maintains 9 Middle schools and aids 1 High school, 55 Middle schools, 360 Upper Primary schools, 2,730 Lower Primary schools, one Industrial school and one other school. For the purposes of medical relief the District Board maintains one dispensary and aids 13 others. Altogether 4·2 per cent. of the ordinary income of the Board was expended in 1907-08 on medical relief and sanitation, a proportion lower than in any other district in the Division. An itinerant veterinary assistant is also entertained by the District Board.

LOCAL BOARDS. In subordination to the District Board are the Midnapore, Ghātāl, Tamlūk and Contai Local Boards, the jurisdiction of each corresponding to the subdivisional charge of the same name. The Sadar or Midnapore Local Board is composed of 24 members, of whom 6 are elected and 18 are nominated; the Ghātāl Local Board has 15 members, of whom 10 are elected and 5 are nominated; the Local Board at Tamlūk has 18 members, of whom one is elected and 17 are nominated; and that at Contai has 21 members, of whom 14 are elected and 7 are nominated. The Local Boards receive allotments from the funds of the District Board, and are entrusted with the maintenance of village roads, pounds and ferries.

UNION COMMITTEES. There are five Union Committees in the district, viz., Contai with an area of 7½ square miles, Jara (10 square miles), Lowādā (10 square miles), Pānskurā (13 square miles) and Pinglā, (the area of which is returned as 'not known'), all constituted in 1895. The aggregate population under these Committees is 63,996, varying from 16,486 in Contai to 11,246 in Jara. The Committee at Contai is administered by a Board of 7 members, while each of the remaining four is composed of 9 members.

MUNICIPALITIES. There are seven municipalities in the district, viz., Midnapore, Tamlūk, Ghātāl, Chandrakonā, Rāmjibanpur, Khīrpai and Kharār. The number of rate-payers in 1907-08 was 16,943, representing 18·9 per cent. of the population (89,615) residing in municipal limits, as compared with the average of 16·71 per cent. for the whole Division. The average incidence of taxation in that year was annas 11-11 per head of the population, as

against the divisional average of Rs. 2-2-8, and varied from 5 annas in Rāmjibanpur to Re. 1-2-11 in Midnapore.

Midnapore. The municipality at Midnapore, which was established in 1865, is administered by a Municipal Board composed of 18 Commissioners, of whom 12 are elected, 3 are nominated by Government, and 3 are *ex-officio* members. The area within municipal limits is 4 square miles, the number of rate-payers being 5,210, or 15·7 per cent. of the population living within municipal limits. The average annual income of the municipality during the decade ending in 1901-02 was Rs. 60,000, and the expenditure averaged Rs. 58,000. In 1907-08 the income aggregated Rs. 74,318, besides an opening balance of Rs. 10,229, and the expenditure was Rs. 75,495. The chief source of income is a tax on holdings assessed at 7¼ per cent. on their annual value; this tax brought in Rs. 18,600. Next in importance is a conservancy rate, which brought in Rs. 14,457. A tax on animals and vehicles realized Rs. 5,557, while Rs. 12,503 were obtained from fees and revenues from educational institutions. The total incidence of taxation was Re. 1-2-11 per head of the population.

Tamlūk. Tamlūk was constituted a municipality in 1864, and has a Municipal Board consisting of 12 Commissioners, of whom 8 are elected, 2 are nominated by Government and 2 are *ex-officio* members. The area within municipal limits is 2¾ square miles, and the number of rate-payers is 2,072, representing 26·32 per cent. of the population residing within municipal limits. The average annual income of the municipality during the 10 years ending in 1901-02 was Rs. 8,000, and the expenditure was Rs. 7,000. In 1907-08 the income of the municipality was Rs. 10,835 (excluding an opening balance of Rs. 1,074), of which Rs. 3,400 were obtained from a tax on persons assessed at 12 annas per cent. on the annual income of the assessees, and a conservancy rate which brought in Rs. 2,327, while fees from markets realized Rs. 2,391. The incidence of taxation was annas 13-5 per head of the population. The expenditure in the same year was Rs. 11,146.

Ghātāl. The municipality of Ghātāl was established in 1869, and is administered by a Municipal Board consisting of 15 Commissioners, of whom 10 are elected and 5 are nominated by Government. The area within municipal limits is nearly 4 square miles, and the number of rate-payers is 2,843, representing 19·55 per cent. of the population living within municipal limits. The average annual income of the municipality during the 10 years ending in 1901-20 was Rs. 8,000, and the expenditure was Rs. 7,000

In 1907-08 its income was Rs. 8,851, besides an opening balance of Rs. 1,954, and the expenditure was Rs. 10,987. The chief source of income is a tax on persons, according to their circumstances and property, levied at $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. on the income of the rate-payers. This tax brought in Rs. 5,724, and a tax on animals and vehicles realized Rs. 1,128. The total incidence of taxation was 8 annas per head of the population.

Chandrakonā. Chandrakonā was constituted a municipality in 1869. It is administered by a Municipal Board of 12 Commissioners, of whom 8 are elected and 4 are nominated by Government. The area within municipal limits is nearly 10 square miles, and the number of rate-payers is 2,160, representing 23·3 per cent. of the population living within the municipal area. The average annual income and expenditure during the 10 years ending in 1901-02 were Rs. 4,000. In 1907-08 its income was Rs. 6,767, besides an opening balance of Rs. 670. The chief source of income was a tax on persons assessed at 1 per cent. according to the circumstances and property of the rate-payers, which brought in Rs. 2,295, while a tax on animals and vehicles realized Rs. 1,037. The incidence of taxation was annas 5-10 per head of the population. The expenditure in the same year was Rs. 6,467.

Rāmjibanpur. The municipality at Rāmjibanpur was establishd in 1876 and is administered by a Municipal Board of 9 Commissioners, of whom 6 are elected and 3 are nominated by Government. The area within municipal limits is 4 square miles and the number of rate-payers is 1,971, representing 19·2 per cent. of the population. The average annual income during the 10 years ending in 1901-02 was Rs. 2,800, and the expenditure averaged Rs. 2,700. In 1907-08 its income was Rs. 4,842, in addition to an opening balance of Rs. 1,100. The principal source of income is a tax on persons assessed at $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. on the annual income of the rate-payers, according to their circumstances and property, which brought in Rs. 2,221. The total incidence of taxation was 5 annas per head of the population. The expenditure during the same year was Rs. 5,223.

Khīrpai. Khīrpai was constituted a municipality in 1876. It has a Municipal Board of 9 Commissioners, of whom 6 are elected and 3 are nominated by Government. The area within the municipality is 2 square miles, and the number of rate-payers is 1,151, or 23·2 per cent. of the population residing within municipal limits. The average annual income and expenditure during the 10 years ending in 1901-02 were Rs. 2,300. In 1907-08 its income was Rs. 3,751, besides an opening balance of

Rs. 364, and the expenditure was Rs. 3,439. The chief source of income was a tax on persons levied at 1¼ per cent. on the annual income of the assessees according to their circumstances and property, which realized Rs. 1,669, while a tax on animals and vehicles realized Rs. 1,210. The incidence of taxation was annas 9-4 per head of the population.

Kharār. The municipality at Kharār was established in 1888. It is administered by a Municipal Board of 15 Commissioners, of whom 10 are elected and 5 are nominated by Government. The area within the municipality is nearly 4 square miles, and the number of rate-payers is 1,536, representing 16·2 per cent. of the population residing within municipal limits. The average annual income during the 10 years ending in 1901-02 was Rs. 3,500, and the expenditure was Rs. 3,600. In 1907-08 the receipts amounted to Rs. 5,177, exclusive of an opening balance of Rs. 793, and the expenditure was Rs 4,692. The chief source of income was a tax on persons levied at 1 per cent. on the annual income of the rate-payers according to their circumstances and property, which brought in Rs 3,083, while a tax on animals and vehicles realized Rs. 1,167. The incidence of taxation was annas 7-3 per head of the population.

CHAPTER XIV.

EDUCATION.

PROGRESS OF EDUCATION.

THE marginal table illustrates the progress of education in Midnapore since 1871-72. In 1908-09 no less than 53·8 per cent. of the boys of school-going age were under instruction and 5·4 per cent. of the female population of school-going age. This proportion compares favourably with the ratio for the whole of Bengal, while the statistics obtained at the census of 1901 show that elementary education, at least, is more widely diffused than in any other district of the province except Howrah. The number of persons returned as literate, *i.e.*, able to read and write, was 295,064, representing 10·6 per cent. (20·5 males and 0·7 females) of the population, while 10,753 persons were able to read and write English.

YEAR.	Schools.	Scholars.
1871-72 ..	2,004	28,144
1880-81 ...	3,966	74,791
1900-01 ...	4,919	118,399
1908-09 ...	4,392	124,734

INSPECTING STAFF.

The inspecting staff consists of a Deputy Inspector of Schools, assisted by four Additional Deputy Inspectors, of 30 Sub-Inspectors and of four Assistant Sub-Inspectors of Schools.

COLLEGIATE EDUCATION.

There is one college in the district, the Midnapore College, which was founded as a Zilā school in 1834, and was converted into a High school in 1873. Since the Government order of the 16th October 1877, changing the nomenclature of Government schools, it has been called the Midnapore Second Grade College. It is supported partly by Government and partly by the interest of an endowment fund, raised by the people of the district and amounting to Rs. 51,000 in Government securities and municipal debentures. The management of the institution, which had been under the control of the Director of Public Instruction and of a District School Committee, was made over by Government to the local municipality, on the 1st of July 1887, on the grant-in-aid system. Students who have passed the University Entrance Examination and intend to work for the First Examination in Arts, are admitted to the college. The tuition fee in the college department is Rs. 5 a month, and that

in the school department varies from one rupee in the lowest, to three rupees in the highest class. A law department was opened in 1873, and was affiliated to the Calcutta University up to the B.L standard in June 1892. On the 31st March 1909 there were 54 students on the rolls of the college.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

There are 119 secondary schools in the district, of which 17 are High schools, 63 are Middle English schools and 39 are Middle Vernacular schools All these schools are under private management with the exception of one High school, six Middle English schools and four Middle Vernacular schools, which are under public management, *i.e.*, are maintained by the District or Municipal Boards. Of the remainder, 10 High schools, 39 Middle English schools, and 26 Middle Vernacular schools are aided. The total attendance at all secondary schools in 1908-09 was 9,924, including 32 girls; altogether 3,170 pupils, or 1·4 per cent. of the population of school-going age, were in the secondary stage of instruction. There were altogether 598 teachers in these schools. The following is a list of the different High schools:—

	Name of School.	Number of pupils on 31st March 1909.
Managed by Municipality.	Midnapore Collegiate school ...	232
Aided ...	Bīrsingha	85
	Chandrakonā	111
	Contai	264
	Garhbetā	211
	Ghātāl	162
	Gopālnagar	150
	Jara	136
	Midnapore (Local Mission) ...	128
	Pinglā	121
	Tamlūk	291
Unaided ...	Irpala	130
	Mahishādal	160
	Midnapore (Hindu) ...	123
	Midnapore (Town) ...	258
	Nārājol	96
	Pachetgarh	41

PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

There are 3,779 Primary schools for boys, of which 366 are Upper Primary and 3,413 are Lower Primary schools. Of the Upper Primary schools, 344 are aided from the District fund and

14 are unaided. Only eight are managed by the Education Department, viz., the practising schools attached to each of the Guru Training schools. Of the Lower Primary schools, 2,785 are aided from the District fund and 628 are unaided. The total attendance in 1908-09 was 104,594, of whom 16,325 were studying in Upper Primary and 88,269 in Lower Primary schools, the average number of pupils in each school being 44·6 and 25·8 respectively. Altogether 50 per cent. of the male population of school-going age attended Primary schools, and there was on the average one such school for every 2·2 villages. There were altogether 4,145 teachers in these schools.

A special system of remunerating the teachers, which is known as the Midnapore system, was introduced in these schools a few years ago. Its main features are as follows. The payment system has been modified, so that the *gurus* are not paid only on the results of the annual examination. They receive a fixed subsistence allowance at the rate of Re. 1 per quarter, in order to ensure the stability of the schools; and the amount of the rewards they are given is regulated by other considerations, *e.g.*, accommodation, total roll number and average attendance, and the qualifications and efficiency of the teachers. The annual examination, which used to be held at selected centres to test their proficiency and the progress made by their pupils, is now held *in situ*. For the encouragement of the teachers, and in order to enable them to impart more useful instruction to their pupils, books, furniture, etc., have been distributed among them, the charge being met from the additional grant made by Government for the purpose.

GIRLS' SCHOOLS.

The total number of girls at school on the 31st March 1909 was 12,344, of whom no less than 6,932 were reading in boys' schools—a fact which goes far to show that co-education is not unpopular in Midnapore. Altogether 290 girls' schools have been opened, viz., 2 Middle English, 62 Upper Primary and 226 Lower Primary. The two Middle English schools are the Quiquota Mission school which is aided, and the Contai Brahmaji school which is unaided. All the Upper Primary schools are aided, and they include two model girls' schools situated at Midnapore and Contai. Of the Lower Primary schools, only 41 are aided. For the teaching of zanāna ladies, there are 12 female teachers, who go from house to house and instruct *pardāh-nashin* ladies.

INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS.

The only technical school in the district is the Mahishādal technical school at Midnapore, which was started in 1885 with the help of an endowment of Rs. 5,000, to which the Rājā of Mahishādal

contributed largely. It is supported by the proceeds of this endowment and by contributions from Provincial revenues and the District fund. The school is affiliated to the Sibpur Engineering College and teaches up to the sub-overseer's standard, the course in the first year being carpentry, and in the second year smith's work. The number on the rolls on 31st March 1909 was 60, of whom 51 were in the sub-overseer's class. The artisan class was attended by only one pupil, and the remaining eight were students belonging to the Midnapore College, who having taken up the B course come to the school to study the technical portion of that course. It is thus more a feeder school to the Sibpur Engineering College than a technical school, for it has few artisans' sons on the rolls, and most students go there to work for the sub-overseership examination. The pupils live in a hostel about a quarter of a mile from the school.

Regarding this school Mr. J. G. Cumming, I.C.S., writes:—"In 1905 the condition of affairs was so bad, that the Principal at Sibpur recommended that the privilege of affiliation should be withdrawn. A strong Committee has, however, been since appointed, in which are included the District Engineer, the Executive Engineer of the Public Works Department and the Chief Mechanical Engineer of the Bengal-Nāgpur Railway, the head-quarters of which are at Kharagpur close to Midnapore. The school does not, and is not, likely to turn out men who will become practical mechanics. The system of apprenticeships for the Kharagpur Railway Workshops gives an opening to any passed pupil who wishes to obtain practical and remunerative employment, but every applicant must remember that there is far more drudgery to be undergone in a commercial workshop than in the workshop attached to an academical institution." *

There is a seri-agricultural school at Sābang, which was started with eight pupils in 1903-04. It is not a flourishing institution, for, though scholarships have been sanctioned by Government in order to attract pupils, it has only five pupils on the rolls. At the Kharagpur Workshops of the Bengal-Nāgpur Railway there is a technical night school, started in 1906, at which attendance for apprentices is compulsory. The subjects taught are geometry, applied mechanics, algebra, mensuration, geometrical drawing and arithmetic.

TRAINING SCHOOLS.

Eight Government schools have been opened for the training of *gurus* or primary school teachers, and there were 131 *gurus* on the rolls in 1908-09. Under this head may be mentioned a training

* *Technical and Industrial Instruction in Bengal*, 1908, page 16.

school at Binpur under the management of the American Baptist Mission, the pupils of which are generally employed as teachers in the Mission schools among the Santāls. At this school 106 male and 61 female pupils were under instruction during 1908-09.

OTHER SCHOOLS.

There is one *madrasa* situated at Patāspur with 65 pupils, 9 *maktabs* for girls, and 142 *maktabs* for boys with 3,864 pupils. There are also a number of Sanskrit schools, which, like the *maktabs*, have adopted the standard prescribed by the Education Department.

EDUCATION OF MUHAMMADANS.

There were at the close of 1908-09 altogether 6,786 Muhammadan pupils under instruction in institutions of all classes, or 42 per cent. of the number of Muhammadan boys of school-going age. As the ratio for boys of all creeds was 53·8 per cent. in the same year, it is apparent that in Midnapore the Muhammadans are more backward than their Hindu neighbours, though special efforts have been made of late years to encourage them by granting subsidies to *maktabs*.

EDUCATION OF SANTALS.

For the education of aboriginals, and in particular of the Santāls, 59 Primary schools have been started, besides the training school at Binpur. The total number of aboriginal pupils at these schools was 2,784 at the close of 1908-09. For their upkeep Government contributes an amount equal to that paid by the Missions which maintain them. Two *guru* instructors are entertained by the latter to supervise the education of aboriginal pupils in the Primary schools under them; and recently an inspecting officer with a knowledge of the Santāli language has been appointed by Government to supervise the Santāli schools in this district and the districts of Bīrbhūm and Bānkurā.

As regards the steps taken to diffuse education among the Santāls the Deputy Inspector of Schools writes: —"Their peculiar habits, conservative nature and almost complete isolation from advanced neighbouring races, and, above all, the absence of any written language in their mother-tongue, stand a great deal in the way of the educational progress of the Santāls. The initial difficulties in the way of introducing education among them have, to a certain extent, been overcome by the strenuous efforts of the missionaries, who have spent large sums not only in maintaining schools for their education, but also in providing house accommodation and free boarding to a large number of pupils in the institutions under their charge."

CHAPTER XV.

GAZETTEER.

Anandapur.—A village in the Keshpur thāna of the Midnapore subdivision, situated 5½ miles east of Gadāpiāsāl railway station and 3 miles west of Keshpur. The village formerly had a considerable tusser silk-weaving industry and was the headquarters of several rich merchants:—it is said, indeed, to have been larger even than Midnapore. During the Chuār rebellion of 1799 it was twice looted and finally burnt down by the rebels. At Kānāsol, one mile to the south, there is a temple of Jhāreswar (Siva), which is visited by a large number of people during the Charak Pūjā at the end of Chait.

Bāgri Pargana.—A *pargana* in the extreme north of the district, with an area of 444 square miles. It was formerly held by a line of Rājās, who were usually feudatories of the Rājās of Mallabhūm (Bishnupur), but sometimes became powerful enough to assert their independence The traditional account of this line is as follows.

The founder of the line was Gajapati Singh, of whom the following legend is told. His parents came from Northern India on a pilgrimage to Jagannāth, and on their way back both died of small-pox at the house of a poor Brāhman in Bakadwīp, as Bāgri was called. The Brāhman took charge of Gajapati, and supported him till he grew old enough to look after the Brāhman's cows. One day, when the boy had not returned at the usual hour, the Brāhman went out to seek him. He found the boy sleeping under an *auch* tree, his face shaded from the sun by a hooded snake. When the Brāhman drew near, the snake glided quietly away. Astonished at the omen, which indicated that the boy was born to greatness, the Brāhman released him from the menial tasks he had hitherto imposed upon him. The rumour spread that Gajapati Singh would become a Rājā, and this soon proved true. At the age of 16 he conquered the whole of Bakadwīp, and in 1165 A.D. made Bāgri his capital.

Gajapati was known by the name of Auch Singh, apparently from the fact that the tree under which he was miraculously protected by the snake was an *auch* tree; the descendants of his successors still pride themselves on being members of the Auch family. Gajapati Singh built a temple of Siva, and dug twelve tanks and a well at Dihi Bāgri. He is said to have died, at the age of 73, in 1222 A.D. He divided his Rāj between two sons, viz., Dhanapati Singh, who ruled at Garhbetā, and Ganapati Singh, who ruled at Goāltor, south-west of Bāgri. The latter dying without issue, the whole Rāj again came into the hands of one ruler. Dhanapati Singh was succeeded by his son Hamir Singh, and the latter by his son Raghunāth Singh, who was a powerful ruler. He conquered a portion of the Jungle Mahāls comprising Simlāpāl, Rāmgarh, Lālgarh, Rāipur, Tungbhūm and Ambikānagar; and carried his arms as far south as Maynā in Sābang, defeating the Rājā of that place in 1322 A.D. He built two temples at Goāltor, one of which was dedicated to the snake goddess Sanat Kumārī, and the temple of Lāljī in Chandrakonā.

Raghunāth Singh was succeeded after a long reign by Chittra Singh, to whom the ruin of the family is ascribed. Weary of his oppression, his subjects appealed to the Bishnupur Rājā, who conquered Bāgri and put an end to the rule of the original Auch line, though subsequent Rājās preserved the name. The Bishnupur Rājās endeavoured to govern Bāgri by deputies for seven years. In 1341 A.D. a Rājput, called Chauhān Singh, ousted their deputy and then accepted the position himself. Before long he made himself a quasi-independent ruler, though the Mallabhūm Rājās appear to have retained at least a nominal sovereignty. Chauhān built a fort round the temple of the goddess Sarbamangalā and died, at an advanced age, after a rule of 55 years.

There is some confusion concerning Chauhān Singh's successor, who was admittedly a dissolute and weak ruler. One account calls him Chattra Singh, but a more reliable account represents Chauhān's son, Auch Singh, as dying without issue, and states that Chattra Singh was a descendant of Chauhān, who was governor of Chandrakonā and became Rājā of Garhbetā. Chattra Singh was succeeded by his son Tilak Chandra, and he again by his son Tej Chandra Singh. The latter built a palace at Rāyakot, erected a gunpowder magazine on the bank of the Bārud Khānā tank at Garhbetā, and repaired the fortifications of the place. The Rājā of Bishnupur now again attacked Garhbetā, and having overthrown Tej Chandra, installed his own son

Durjan Singh as ruler. Durjan Singh was succeeded by Khaira Malla, a cruel and unpopular ruler, who was dethroned and slain with the aid of an army from Mayūrbhanj led by Sham Sher Bahādur, with whom legends pass into definite history.

Sham Sher built a residence at Mangalāpatā, where the family still reside, and was succeeded by his son Baishnab Chandra Singh. The latter was succeeded by his son Jādab Chandra Singh or Sen, who was the last of the independent rulers of Bāgri, for, during his time, it became a tributary of the Burdwān Raj, before which the power of Bishnupur waned. Jādab Chandra resisted the endeavours of the Burdwān Rājā to bring him to subjection, and for many years his territory was governed by *naibs*, who remitted the revenue to Burdwān. A rebellion occurred about 1785, in which Jādab Chandra was supposed to be implicated; and he was seized and carried off to Calcutta where he died about 1790. His son Chattra Sen was formally dispossessed of the zamīndāri some years later and given a pension of Rs. 500, his grandson receiving Rs. 250 at his death.

Bāgri is mentioned in the *Aīn-i-Akbari* as a *mahāl* of *Sarkār* Jaleswar. Its zamīndār was a Rājput, and being extremely jungly, it was assessed to a revenue of only 39,428 *dams* (Rs. 985). Its inclusion in *Sarkār* Jaleswar shows that it had been brought under subjection by the Oriyās. In the settlement of Prince Shāh Shuja (1658 A.D.), it appears as part of *Sarkār* Goālpārā. After the settlement of 1728 A.D., and before the British occupation in 1760, a portion of the *pargana* had passed into the hands of the Burdwān Rāj and bore an assessment of Rs. 7,001 out of a total assessment of Rs. 24,283. Another portion, *taraf* Bela, was in the direct possession of the Bāgri Rājā, but was confiscated by Government for his alleged complicity in the rebellion of the Chuārs in 1816-17. The Burdwān Rājā having defaulted for his share of the estate, it passed by auction sale into the hands of Sambhu Chandra Mukhārji and others, who let it out in *patnī* to Messrs. Watson & Co. (subsequently merged in the Midnapore Zamīndāri Company).

Bālighāi—See Egrā.

Balrāmpur.—A *pargana* of the Jungle Mahāls with an area of 58 square miles. According to tradition, it belonged originally to a Khairā Rājā, who was murdered by three of his officers, and Balrāmpur fell to his *Garh Sardār*. During the early days of British administration (1777-78 A.D.), it formed part of the zamīndāri of Kāsijorā. The zamīndār defaulted, and, at the time of the Decennial Settlement, the *pargana* was settled with one Bīr Prasād Dās, the Sadr Chaudhri, or chief collecting officer

of the district. He died, leaving no son, and disputes arose between his two wives, which led to the sale of the property in 1837. Government purchased the estate, and a settlement was made under Regulation VII of 1822.

Various stories are told of Bīr Prasād Chaudhri, who is said to have been a great sportsman and to have kept his Balrāmpur estate as a preserve for game (*shikārgāh*). One story relates how as a punishment for the abduction of a lady of rank in Midnapore town, the Chaudhri was sentenced to corporal punishment of thirty stripes; and that the man who had to inflict it received from him a reward of ten *bīghas* of rent-free land for every stripe inflicted, making 300 *bīghas*, or 100 acres in all, in consideration of his laying on the stripes so lightly as to cause no pain, while the sound of the blow was such as to make it appear that it was given with full force. This grant of land was resumed by the Government at the time of the settlement (about 1840), and settled with the rent-free holder at half-rates. The Balrāmpur estate is now under resettlement.

Bārdā.—A *pargana* in the Ghātāl subdivision lying east of Chandrakonā, with an area of 82½ square miles. It is not mentioned in the *Aīn-i-Akbari*, and first came into prominence in 1696, when its zamīndār Subhā Singh revolted, as mentioned in Chapter II, and killed Kishen Rām of Burdwān. According to tradition, Subhā Singh built the *dargāh* of Hazrat Ismail at Madāran to commemorate this success. Subsequently, before the British inaugurated their rule, Jahānābād with *tappā* Bārdā became part of the extensive territory that formed the Burdwān Rāj. The Burdwān Rāj having defaulted in payment of land revenue for the estate, it was sold up and passed into other hands. Among the present zamīndārs are the Gosain family of Serampore. From the description of Bārdā as a *tappā* of Jahānābād, it would appear that in the time of Akbar it was included in the large *mahāl* of Haveli Madāran. In Valentijn's map "Barada" appears as a large village on a branch of the Dāmodar falling into the Rūpnārāyān; it is also shown in Rennell's Atlas.

Belāberiā.—A jungle estate owned for many generations by a family known as the Praharāj family, the traditions of which are as follows. Its founder was one Nimāi Chānd, who was one of the counsellors of Pratāparudra Deva, the Hindu king of Orissa. At the time of Kālāpāhār's invasion, Nimāi Chānd fled to the north in obedience to a dream and came to Sansāra Malla, the Rājā of Mallabhūm. One day he was asked by Sansāra Malla to eat with him. As he had to sit in the sun, Sansāra offered him an umbrella and asked him his destination. Nimāi Chānd, remembering

his dream, enquired where he should put the umbrella, which, he said, the Rājā had so generously given him. The Rājā understood the drift of the Brāhman's question, and ordered him to ride as far as he could within a *prahar* (three hours). Nimāi Chānd thereupon started from the village of Pathrā and rode as far as Jāhārpur; and the Rājā bestowed on him the whole of the intervening space. As the country mostly consisted of the sandy land along the Subarnarekhā and Dalang rivers, it was called Belāberiā; and the circuit having been made within a *prahar*, Nimāi Chānd was given the title of Praharāj. This is the legend, but the title is not uncommon among Oriyā Brāhmans, and Bayley calls the family " Buia ".

Nimāi Chānd made his authority recognized in the territory so granted, and, after him, eight of his line ruled. The ninth Praharāj was Gobardhan, who was held in high esteem for his charity. He opened a *dharmasālā*, built several temples, and dug many tanks. Of his descendants there is nothing of interest to relate till we come to the fourteenth Praharāj, Gobind Rām, who was famous for his military prowess and saved his zamīndāri from the attacks of the Marāthās. In his time a neighbouring zamīndār, named Madhu Kar, joined the Marāthās in an attack on Belāberiā, but he was defeated by Gobind Rām and his zamīndāri annexed to that of Belāberiā. Gobind Rām died in 1781, and the most notable of his successors was the eighteenth Praharāj, Jagannāth Dās, who was given the title of *Chaudhri* in recognition of his public spirit and munificence during the famine of 1866.

The present proprietor is Krishna Chandra Praharāj, the twenty-first Praharāj. The rent-roll of the estate is reported to be Rs. 40,000 and its area is about 20 square miles.

Bīrkul.—A village in the extreme south-west of the Contāi subdivision, situated on the sea coast, 26 miles south-west of Contāi. It appears as Noricool in the map of Valentijn (1664 A.D.) and the chart of Thomas Bowrey (1688 A.D.). In the pilot chart of 1703, the village is not shown, but a small stream in the same locality is named R. Bitecool. It is entered in Rennell's Atlas. In the early settlement records of the British, it gave its name to a salt *pargana*, (Beercool) belonging to Chakla Jaleswar, *Sarkār* Majkuri, which was subsequently attached to the Hijilī Division; the Rājā of Mayūrbhanj put in a claim to the Bīrkul estate, which was rejected.* The *pargana* has an area of 35 square miles.

* Bengal Manuscript Records, Volume I, Nos. 750, 751 and 770.

In the 18th century Bīrkul was a seaside resort for Europeans and contained a bungalow, said to have been used by Warren Hastings, which was washed away by the sea many years ago. The Public Works Department has since erected an inspection bungalow, a quarter of a mile further inland, at a place named Dighā on a sand ridge facing the Bay of Bengal. Birkul is described as follows by Sydney Grier in the *Letters of Warren Hastings to his wife*:—"Beercool was the sanatorium—the Brighton—of Calcutta, and the newspapers and Council records mention constantly that So-and-So is 'gone to Beercool for his health'. Coursing, deer-stalking, hunting and fishing are mentioned as being obtainable in the neighbourhood, and in May of this year (1718) the 'Bengal Gazette' gives publicity to a scheme for developing the place quite in the modern style. It has already the advantage of a beach which provides perhaps the best road in the world for carriages and is totally free from all noxious animals except crabs, and there is a proposal to erect convenient apartments for the reception of nobility and gentry, and organize entertainments." The scheme appears to have been only partially carried out, for in 1796 Charles Chapman wrote :—"We passed part of the last Hot Season at Beercool, to which place I believe you and Messrs. Hastings once projected an Excursion. The Terrace of the Bungalow, intended for you, is still pointed out by the People, but that is all that remains of it. The Beach is certainly the finest in the World, and the Air such as to preclude any Inconvenience being felt from the Heat. Mrs. Chapman found the Bathing agree with her so well, that, if here and alive next year, we shall make another Trip."

In 1852 Bayley described it as having a delicious sea breeze in the summer. "But fresh water is not to be got within four miles; and even that is not very fresh; and the sand-hills moreover have lately been cut away by the sea, and, of the three bungalows upon them, two are gone, and one all but gone."

Bīrsingh.—A village in the Ghātāl subdivision. It is the birth place of Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyāsāgar, Principal of the Sanskrit College, Calcutta, and founder of the Metropolitan Institution (the first unaided college in India that was started by an Indian), who was well known as a Hindu social reformer.

Brāhmanbhūm Pargana.—A *pargana* in the north of the district, with an area of 98 square miles, which is so called because it was held by an old family of Brāhmans. According to their records, the principality of Brāhmanbhūm was founded in Saka

772 (850 A.D.) by Umāpati Deb Bhattāchārji, who immigrated from Rishighatta on the bank of the Ganges. He was, as usual in such traditions, going to the shrine of Jagannāth and was stopped on the way by a dream in which he was informed that there was no need for him to go to Purī, as the real god would be found hidden underground at a spot where milk flowed spontaneously from a milch-cow and moistened the earth. He discovered the spot, and digging down found the idol (linga). On this spot he established the shrine of Kāmeswar and then proceeded to clear the jungle, and found a kingdom. According to a tradition current in Chandrakonā, one of the successors of Chandraketu wrested the land from the hands of an aboriginal chief and made it over to the priest of Kāmeswar. The archives give the names of twenty of his successors until the Rāj ended in 1761 A.D. The existence of the Rāj is also proved by the mention of some of the Rājās in the poem *Chandī* of Mukundarām Kavikankan (*circa* 1600), who, flying from his home in Burdwān, took refuge with Raghunāth Rāi, son of Rājā Bānkuda Rāi, at Arādā, 4 miles from Chandrakonā. This *pargana* was ultimately absorbed by the Burdwān Rāj, and appears in the early British settlement of 1771 with a rent-roll of Rs. 35,910.

Chāndpur.—A village in the south-east of the Contāi subdivision, situated on the sea-coast 14 miles south-south-west of Contāi. The place lies above flood-level, and is said to be suitable for the purposes of a sanatorium. It is situated a short distance inland and possesses a fine turf lawn, half-a-mile long by 300 yards broad, on almost any part of which excellent fresh water can be got by digging. The sea is visible from this raised lawn, below which, and within 300 yards of it, is a beach of firm hard sand, stretching for miles on either side. Water-carriage is available almost to the very spot, and during the hot summer months there is a delightfully cool sea breeze, day and night.

Chandrakonā.—A village in the Ghātāl subdivision, situated 11 miles east of the Chandrakonā Road station and 28 miles north-east of Midnapore. It contains a police-station, a dispensary and a District Board bungalow.

The town extends over a fairly large area (about 6 square miles), and is built on the laterite soil that forms the eastern edge of the Bāgri laterite tableland and slopes down on the east to the kankariferous bed of the Bānkā *alias* Silāi river. Gaunt trees and thorny plants abound, while water is not easily available, except at depths of 12 to 20 feet. The houses are usually made of a very stiff clay, the detritus of laterite; this clay is so hard that double-storied houses (*māthā* or *kuthi bāri*) are not infrequently

made of it. The drainage is also good, the slope being towards the east. In spite of these natural advantages, the town does not present a prosperous appearance. Its population is small, and many houses are in ruins, while others are dilapidated, lying in scattered groups separated by patches of open ground. Malaria is endemic, and the people generally have a sickly appearance. The special manufactures of the place are cloth-weaving and the manufacture of brass and bell-metal utensils.

In the palmy days of Chandrakonā, the town was divided into many bazars, such as Bhāyer Bazar, Khirki Bazar, Bara Bazar, Nutan Bazar, Samādhi Bazar, the names of which have survived, though the markets have more or less disappeared. The former importance of the place is shown by several remains and old institutions, among which may be mentioned three *asthāls*, three forts and a group of temples kept up by the Burdwān Rāj. The three forts, which are called Lālgarh, Rāmgarh and Raghunāthgarh, are in utter ruin, and no description of them is required. The *asthāls* are monastic and charitable institutions maintained by endowments of land and managed by *mahants* or abbots. All three have up-country *mahants*, the most influential of whom, Bharath Rāmānuja Dās, is Chairman of the municipality.

Among the temples maintained by the Burdwān Rāj the following may be mentioned. The Lālji temple, which stands on a high plinth, is of the Bengali style of architecture. In its verandah is preserved a stone slab (lying loose) with an inscription in Bengali characters, dated 1577 Saka (1655 A.D.), recording the erection of a Navaratna temple of Krishna by Rānī Lakshmanāvatī, wife of Rājā Hari Nārāyan. In front of the Lālji temple is a *nātmandir* or dancing hall, to the west of which stands an Orissan tower with a porch in front dedicated to Raghunāthjī. The outer yard is separated from the inner by a wall, and contains a small Pancharatna temple of Kāmeswar Siva with an inscription dated 1577 Saka; to its south-west lies a circular pavement for the *rāsmancha*. The whole is enclosed by a high wall, with a large gateway to the east; over the gateway is a slab with a Bengali inscription ascribing the erection of the *thākurbārī* to the Burdwān Rāj in 1238 B.S. (1831 A.D.). In front of the gateway are two cars, which are drawn on the Dasaharā day, the smaller being that of Lāljī and the larger that of Raghunāthjī. The cost of the establishment and of the festivals is met from the income of a *debottar* estate set apart for the purpose by the Burdwān Rāj.

The temple of Malleswar, two miles from the police-station, also belongs to the Burdwān Rāj. It is nearly 60 feet high and was built by Rājā Kirtti Chandra of Burdwān in the first quarter of the 18th century; but the shrine is said to be much older, being ascribed to Khaira Malla, the last Malla king of this tract. In the floor inside is a hollow about 2½ feet deep, the upper edge being built of masonry, while the basin is made up of laterite slabs. The slabs have two openings or crevices, through which water flows, apparently from a spring or springs, and, it is said, fills the hollows on particular nights. This has been observed in other sacred places; for example, in the temple of Loknāth at Purī, where the basin in which the *linga* stands is filled with water, except on the Sivarātri day, when it is baled out and the *linga* exposed.

According to tradition, Chandrakonā was formerly called Mānā and was held in the eighth century A.D. by a Rājā named Khaira Malla, a name which also appears in the Bāgri annals. During his reign a Rājput prince named Chandraketu, while on his way from Purī, encamped in the jungle of Debgiri near Chandrakonā. In old heroic fashion he challenged the Rājā to battle, defeated him and assumed his sceptre, naming the town after himself. After consolidating his power, he sent a missive of war to the neighbouring Rājā of Jārā, who cheerfully accepted the challenge and went forth to battle. He signally defeated Chandraketu and returned in triumph, but he found his city in mourning, for a false report of his death had preceded him through two favourite pigeons flying home, and his wives had perished on the funeral pyre. In despair he slew himself, and Chandraketu found himself without a rival.

Now in the adjacent kingdom of Bakadwīp (Bāgri) there ruled a Rākshasa prince, named Bakāsura, who exacted as tribute from his subjects daily contributions of human flesh. At this time the Pāndava brothers sought shelter in the house of a friendly Brāhman in the dense forests of Bakadwīp. Bhīma, stirred to anger by the recital of such enormities, slew the Rākshasa monster and presented his territory to Chandraketu, who presumably lent his aid to the enterprise. The latter built the forts of Lālgarh and Rāmgarh, appointing his two generals Lāl Singh and Rām Singh as their wardens. These generals established in their respective forts the idols of Lāljī and Raghunāthjī; the Rājā himself consecrated the idol of Muralībihāri (Krishna) in Hambir fort; while his minister Gangārām established the idol Madanmohan in Shāmsundarpur. Chandraketu

also established the various bazars (markets) in the town, making a gift of Samādhi Bazar to his *guru* or spiritual guide.

The descendants of Chandraketu are said to have ruled at Chandrakonā up to the end of the 16th century, when a Rājput Chauhān prince, Birbhānu Singh, invaded their territory. Such was the terror he inspired, that the reigning prince drowned himself in a tank with his wives and treasure; and Birbhānu then assumed the sovereignty without opposition. He founded the village of Birbhānpur, two miles north-west of Khirpāi, and the market of Ilāmbazar in the town. His reign was otherwise uneventful, and on his death his seven Rānīs performed the rite of *satī*. The son of Birbhānu, Hari Nārāyan, succeeded him and married into the Malla family. His son Mitra Sen built the mud fort which may still be seen at Chandrakonā. During his time the Chuārs revolted, and took forcible possession of the tract they inhabited. They also raided the town and carried away the idols of Raghunāthjī and Lāljī, which were, however, recovered from them by the priests after much difficulty.

To the above legendary account it may be added that, in the *Tuzuk-i-Jahāngīrī*, Hari Bhan, zamīndār of Chandrakonā, is mentioned as a rebel (1617 A.D.), but in the *Pādishāhnama* he appears among the imperial *mansabdārs* (commanders of five hundred), from which we may conclude that Chandrakonā had submitted to the Mughals. The legendary relationship above referred to is corroborated by the inscription on the chlorite slab lying loose in the Lāljī temple. It describes Rānī Lakshmanāvatī, the builder of the Navaratna temple, as the consort (widow) of Hari Nārāyan, daughter-in-law of Birbhānu, mother of king Mitra Sen, daughter of Honavaya (?) and sister of Nārāyan Malla. The fact that Mitra Sen is described as king indicates that Hari Nārāyan had died before April 1655 A.D., the date of the inscription. Mitra Sen died childless, and his principality passed to the maternal line, the Malla family of Bishnupur. In the beginning of the 18th century Rājā Kīrtti Chandra of Burdwān overran and annexed Chandrakonā. To his munificence is due the erection of the temples already mentioned and of the Malleswar temple. He placed the property in charge of his brother-in-law Rāmji Bābu, who repaired the fort of Raghunāthgarh. Kīrtti Chandra was succeeded by his son Chitra Sen, whose name is inscribed in Persian on four guns still to be seen in the town. On the death of Chitra Sen in 1745 A.D., his uncle's son, Tilak Chānd, succeeded, and after him came his son, Tej Chānd. During their time Chandrakonā suffered from the raids of the

Chuārs, who, in their rebellion of 1799, committed numerous depredations in this thāna.

Chandrakonā was a flourishing place in the second half of the 17th century, and in Valentijn's map (*circa* 1670 A.D.) it appears as a large village on an unnamed river (the Silāi) under the name of Sjandercona. It was a centre of sugar manufacture and cotton-weaving; the yarns produced were of so fine a texture that they sold for 2½ *tolās* per rupee. It continued to flourish in the 18th century, being an entrepôt for fine cloths: its *doreahs*, or striped cloths, were specially prized. The weaving industry was further developed in the second half of that century by the location of an important factory of the East India Company in the neighbourhood, viz., at Khirpāi. In the 19th century the industry declined owing to the withdrawal of the Company from commercial undertakings and the importation of English piece-goods. The famines of 1866 and 1874 also thinned the population, and the fever and cholera that ensued proved, if possible, still more disastrous. The census of 1872 showed 21,311 inhabitants, and since then the population has steadily decreased, numbering only 9,309 in 1901. At present the weaving industry shows signs of revival owing to the greater demand for hand-loom cloths caused by the *swadeshī* movement. Various kinds of *dhotis*, *chādars* and *sāris* are woven, which are commonly known as Chandrakonā cloths; they are sold in the *hāts* at Rāmjībanpur or Howrah, or brought direct from the weavers by Calcutta merchants.

Chandrakonā Pargana.—A *pargana*, situated between Bāgri and Bārdā in the Chandrakonā thāna. It is not mentioned in the *Aīn-i-Akbarī*, being apparently included in the extensive *mahāl* of Haveli Madāran, but in the settlement of 1728 it appears as a *tāluk* in the zamīndāri of Burdwān. Its flourishing condition in the second half of the 18th century is indicated by its large revenue in the English rent-roll of 1771 A.D., viz., Rs. 1,68,053. It then formed part of the Burdwān district, but was transferred to Hooghly, when the latter was constituted a revenue district, in 1795. In spite of frequent agitation it continued to be a part and parcel of the latter district until 1874, when it was finally transferred to Midnapore. The *pargana* contains a large number of weavers; the industry is not confined to the weaving castes, such as Tāntis, but is also taken up by Brāhmans and other high castes.

Chandrarekhāgarh.—See Nayāgrām.

Chitwā Pargana.—A *pargana* in the north-east of the district, situated in the Ghātāl subdivision, with an area of 120 square

miles. In the *Āīn-i-Akbarī* it is referred to as a *mahāl* of *Sarkār* Madāran, paying a revenue of Rs. 20,163. It was traversed by the old Pādishāhī road, and is mentioned in the accounts of the war between the Mughals and Afghāns. In 1575 A.D. Todar Mal marched from Madāran fort into *pargana* Chitwā, where he was joined by Munim Khān. More than a century later, in 1696, Subha Singh, the zamīndār of Chitwā and Bārdā, rebelled, and after defeating the Burdwān Rājā killed him. A few years later the zamīndār of these two *parganas* defaulted in payment of revenue, upon which Nawāb Kartallab Khān sent his *diwān*, *peshkār* and *kānungo* against him with a military force. The zamīndār fled from the country, and the Nawāb granted the zamīndāri to Rājā Kīrtti Chandra of Burdwān. In 1771 it was assessed to a revenue of Rs. 1,00,469, and settled with the Burdwān Rāj in the Decennial Settlement. In 1801 it was transferred to Midnapore.

The *pargana* consists of seven *mahāls*, one of which still belongs to the Burdwān Rāj, being let out in *patnī*. Sugarcane, rice, mustard and other *rabi* crops are produced in this *pargana*, which suffers somewhat from inundation but is fertile and tolerably secure against drought. A large part of the *pargana* is in thāna Dāspur, which is therefore often called Chitwā Dāspur.

Contāi (*Kānthi*).—Head-quarters of the subdivision of the same name, situated on a sandy ridge 12 miles from the Bay of Bengal. The place was formerly the head-quarters of a Salt Agency, the buildings of which now form the subdivisional offices (in the lower storey) and Subdivisional Officer's quarters (in the upper storey). The place has declined since the manufacture of salt stopped, and its population in 1901 was only 2,558. It contains the usual offices found at a subdivisional head-quarters, a sub-jail, a dispensary, a sub-registry office, the Local Board's office, and Munsifs' Court, besides a large *khās mahāl* office. It is not easily accessible, for it is 36 miles from Contāi Road station; but the road is good, even in the rains.

Contāi first became of importance in the days when European ships began to visit the ports in the neighbourhood. Though situated inland, it lay on the road from Balasore and Piplī to Hijilī, the three chief ports on the west of the Bay of Bengal, and thus shared in their export trade. Under the name of Kendoa, it is mentioned in a letter of the Revd. John Evans, dated the 2nd April 1679,* which speaks of his having intended to travel in a country boat from the sloop in which he had sailed

* W. Hedges' *Diary*, Vol. II, p. 131.

to this place, as if it was on some stream. In Valentijn's map, too, Kindua is shown at the end of a small stream, which has now disappeared owing to sand drifts. From Valentijn's Memoirs, the Dutch appear to have had a station at "Kendua" for the trade in rice and other articles, and to have subsequently abandoned it. The foreign export trade gradually declined, but the manufacture of salt increased and Contāi became the head-quarters of the Hijilī Division of the Salt Agency. A large *khās mahāl* office was located here, after several estates had to be held *khās* in consequence of the zamīndārs defaulting in the payment of revenue; and eventually it became the administrative head-quarters of the subdivision.

Contāi Subdivision.—Southern subdivision of the district, lying between 21° 36′ and 22° 11′ N., and between 87° 25′ and 87° 59′ E., with an area of 849 square miles. The south-east of the subdivision is a maritime tract lying along the Bay of Bengal. The remainder is an alluvial plain watered by two navigable rivers, the Haldī and Rasūlpur, and by a number of tidal *khāls* or creeks, most of which fall into those two rivers. In this plain there is a wide expanse of rice-fields relieved only by clumps of date and cocoanut palms, *babul*, *supāri* (betel-nut), tamarisk, banyan, *pīpal*, bamboos and plantains, which mark the village sites. The soil is fertile, and, except in certain low-lying and water-logged tracts, there is rarely a failure of the crops.

The monotony of the rice plains contrasts strongly with the picturesque scenery of the Rāmnagar thāna. Here a broad sandy ridge, which may be called the Contāi Ridge, stretches from near the outlet of the Rasūlpur to the boundary of the Balasore district at varying distances of one to five miles from the sea. A second line of sand (the Rāmnagar Ridge) runs between the Contāi ridge and the Bay of Bengal, both being parallel to the sea. The broad strip of land between these ridges is composed of rich alluvial deposit, which is cultivated with rice. Below the surface soil there is a large admixture of silt, and this fact accounts for the luxuriant vegetation and fine trees which clothe the ridges. These sandy ridges have been described in a well-known novel of Babu Bankim Chandra Chatterji, the *Kapāla-Kundalā*.

The embankment system is of special importance in this subdivision owing to the danger of storm-waves and tidal inundation, which is obviated by the construction of the great sea-dyke and of minor embankments. There is also an interior system of embankments constructed by private enterprise, which serve both to keep out flood water and in time of short rainfall to keep water

from running to waste. Within these *chak-bāndhs* again are found small *āris* or field embankments, which conserve the rainfall within each plot.

The population of the subdivision was 603,136 in 1901, as compared with 545,358 in 1891, the density being 710 persons to the square mile. It contains 2,062 villages, including Contāi, its head-quarters, but no town. This is the most progressive part of the Midnapore district, the population increasing by 10·6 per cent. during the decade ending in 1901, owing largely to the influx of cultivators to the newly reclaimed lands, known as *jalpāi*, or fuel, lands and so called because they formerly supplied fuel for boiling brine when the landholders manufactured salt. For administrative purposes the subdivision is divided into six thānās, viz., Contāi, Khejrī (Kedgeree), Rāmnagar, Bhagwānpur, Egrā and Patāspur.

Cowcolly.—See Kaukhāli.

Dāntan.—A village in the south of the Midnapore subdivision, situated 40 miles south of Midnapore. It contains a Munsif's court, railway station, police-station and dispensary. It lies on the Orissa Trunk Road, and is inhabited by people speaking for the most part a patois of the Oriyā language. The Purī Lodging house Act was formerly in operation here, but the village was withdrawn from its operation on 1st November 1908. It used to be a great mart for cloths of tusser silk and fabrics of mixed silk and cotton, but this trade has declined. Before the railway was opened, the place was infested by bands of thieves and dacoits, who robbed the pilgrims passing on the Trunk Road, and escaped to the neighbouring Mayūrbhanj State, if pursued.

The most interesting building in Dāntan is a temple dedicated to Syāmaleswar, at the entrance of which there is a large stone statue of a bull lying in front of Siva; its forelegs are said to have been cut off by Kālāpāhār. There are also two large tanks in the village, one called the Bidyādhar tank and the other, about 2 miles east of it, known by the name of Sarsankha. The first is about 1,600 feet in length and 1,200 feet in breadth. It was excavated, according to tradition, under the orders of Bidyādhar, the minister of Telinga Mukunda Deva, the last Hindu king of Orissa. The records of the history of Orissa show that Govinda Bidyādhar was the minister of Pratāparudra Deva, on whose death he seized the throne.* The other tank, which has silted up, is said to have been excavated by Rājā Sasānka Deva, of the Pāndava family, while on his way to Jagannāth.

* M. M. Chakravarti, *The Last Hindu King of Orissa*, J. A. S. B., 1900, pp. 186-87.

In the palm-leaf chronicles of the Jagannāth (Purī) temple, however, there is a reference to a king of the Ganga dynasty named Sarasankha Deva; while Sasānka was a real historical personage, being a powerful king of Gaur in the early part of the 7th century A.D., whose territory extended as far south as Ganjām. This tank is 5,000 feet long and 2,500 feet broad. It is said that there is underground communication between the tanks by means of a tunnel made of stone, about 7½ feet high and 4½ feet broad.

According to local tradition, Chaitanya on his way to Jagannāth, about 200 years ago, brushed his teeth here, and from this circumstance the village got the name of Dāntan (tooth-brush). Another account asserts it to have been the capital of Bhoj Rājā, the father-in-law of Vikramāditya, king of Ujjain. It would, however, appear from a history of Dāntan given by Pandit Jadunandan, about 230 years ago, that it is a village of old standing and that its origin is not so modern as the legend about Chaitanya would indicate. In fact, the biographies of Chaitanya distinctly mention the fact that Chaitanya passed through Dāntan, which must have been at that time a pretty large village. In the British rent records of 1771 A.D., Dāntan appears as a *pargana* of *Sarkār* Jaleswar.

Dāspur.—A village in the Ghātāl subdivision, situated 5 miles south of Ghātāl. It contains a police-station and is the home of a number of artisan families; a considerable percentage of the domestic servants employed in Calcutta are inhabitants of the thāna to which it gives its name. Rājnagar, 5 miles to the south-west, is an important weaving village, and Guruli, 3 miles to the west, contains a silk factory, which till lately belonged to Messrs. Louis Payen & Co. of Lyons. Rānīchak, on the Rūpnārāyan river, is a place of call for the Ghātāl steamers.

Deulbārh.—See Nayāgrām.

Egrā.—A village in the Contāi subdivision, situated on the Contāi road, 17 miles north-west of the subdivisional head-quarters. It contains a police-station, a District Board bungalow and a temple dedicated to Siva called Hātnagar; legend relates that the present idol was set up by Mukunda Deva, king of Orissa. A *melā* is held here at the time of the Sivarātri festival in February-March, which is attended by thousands of pilgrims. For some time Egrā, or rather Nagwān, was the seat of a Joint-Magistrate's court. Egrāchaur appears in the early British records as a *pargana* of *Sarkār* Jaleswar. Balighāi, 3 miles to the south, was formerly a considerable trade centre, but has lost its importance. Kasbā, 5 miles to the north,

contains a mosque with a Persian inscription, which is said to have been built in 1060 B.S. (1653 A.D.) by Shāh Shuja, the Viceroy of Bengal.

Gaganeswar.—A village in the Midnapore subdivision, situated 3 miles from Kesiāri. It contains a fort called Karambera, of which the outer walls are still almost intact. These walls, which are built of laterite, are about 10 feet high; inside is a complete row of cloisters about 8 feet wide. At the east end are the ruins of a temple of Siva; an image of Siva lies at the bottom of a well, where it is still worshipped. An Oriyā inscription, which belongs to the time of Kapileswar Deva (1434—1469 A.D.), though half-effaced, seems to give the date of the fort and the temple. At the west end inside the enclosure, stands a mosque which is unused, the fort having again passed into Hindu hands. The mosque, with its prayer niches having stones horizontally placed in the arches, appears to have been built from Hindu remains. On the western inner wall is a stone with an inscription, partly obliterated, showing that the mosque was constructed by Muhammad Tahir in the reign of Aurangzeb, and that it was completed in 1102 Hijri (1691 A.D.). To the north is a deep and large tank, full of alligators, called Jageswar Kund. The remains found here indicate that the village lay near the old Pādshāhī road to Orissa, and that it was a place of some importance. It was very probably called after its presiding deity (Siva).

Garhbetā.—A village in the Midnapore subdivision, situated 32 miles north of Midnapore. It contains a railway station, police thāna, Public Works inspection bungalow, a Munsif's court and a dispensary. It is built on laterite soil, and is considered one of the healthiest places in the district. For a short time it was the head-quarters of a subdivision. The opening of the railway has increased its importance of late years and has considerably developed the local trade in timber and other jungle products. In old days, Garhbetā formed the capital of the Bāgri Rājās, who also had another head-quarters at Goāltor. In the village there are the remains of an old fort, which, though ruinous, show that the Rājās of Bāgri once must have been powerful chiefs. The entrances, in which there were massive gateways, still bear their respective names, viz., Lāl Darwāzā, Hanumān Darwāzā, Pesha Darwāzā, and Rauta Darwāzā. Within the circuit of the fort are seven large, silted up tanks, called Jaltungi, Indrapushkarini, Pathurihaduā, Mangalā, Kabesdighi, Āmpushkarini and Haduā, each with a temple in the centre They all lie towards the north of the fort, and it is believed

that they were excavated, between 1555 and 1610 A.D., in the time of the Chauhān Rājās of Bāgri.

One of the principal temples in Garhbetā is the temple of Sarvvamangalā. It is an old building, but it is not known when and by whom it was built. It is peculiar in having its door facing the north. Two separate legends are given to account for this fact, according to one of which the temple was built and the fort repaired by Rājā Gajapati Singh of Bāgri. The temple of Kangeswar, *alias* Kāmeswar, Siva is coeval with the temple of Sarvvamangalā and is built on the same plan. The temple of Radhāballabh was built in 1697 A.D. during the reign of Durjan Singh Malla. Krishnanagar, six miles to the north-west, contains a temple of Krishna Rai, which is visited by numerous pilgrims during the Dol Jātra.

Geonkhāli.—A village in the Tamlūk subdivision, situated on the right bank of the river Hooghly. Population (1901) 524. There is a lock here at the entrance of the Hijilī Tidal Canal, and the place has a considerable trade. It is connected with Calcutta by a steamer service of the Calcutta Steam Navigation Company. Owing to its position opposite Hooghly Point, where the Hooghly estuary narrows into the river, the place was known to the Europeans at an early date. It appears in the pilot chart of 1703 as Gonga Colle, and is shown in Rennell's Atlas. It is also mentioned several times in the early British records of Midnapore as being on the route by which treasure and bales of piece-goods were sent from the headquarters.

Ghātāl.—Headquarters of the subdivision of the same name situated on the Silāi river, 4 miles above its junction with the Rūpnārāyan. Population (1901) 14,525. The town is an important trade centre, and is connected with Calcutta by a daily service of steamers. The steamers proceed ordinarily to Rānīchak on the Rūpnārāyan, whence the journey to Ghātāl is made by boats; but in the rains small steamers ply to and from Ghātāl. It contains the usual public offices, a subdivisional office, a sub-jail, a Munsif's court, Municipal and Local Board offices, and a dispensary. The town extends for more than a mile and a half on both sides of the river, which is crossed by a bridge of boats. The public offices are on the right (south) side, while there is a large bazar on the north side. The river banks are high and the river itself is narrow, being not more than 50 feet wide. Its water falls very low in the winter, and is further reduced towards its end by being taken off for irrigating the spring crops.

Its chief industries are the weaving of cotton and tusser silk cloths, the manufacture of bell-metal utensils and the preparation

of earthen pots. The weavers live mostly on the south side of the river and work on a system of advances from merchants. The fabrics made here are mostly of a common quality, cheap but durable. The industry is an old one, for the Dutch had a factory in the town; and in the early days of British occupation, a Resident was located here, Ghātāl being practically the port for the Arambāgh and Ghātāl subdivisions. The earthen pots of Ghātāl are highly esteemed on account of their being able to stand the heat of the fire without injury, and are largely exported to Calcutta. The potter is helped in his work by his women and children and can turn out 3 to 4 dozen pots in a day, working up to 10 o'clock at night. The price is, however, very low, about a pice each, and leaves little margin for the family.

Recently the manufacture of bell-metal utensils, chiefly *badnas* (water vessels), has been started. Copper is imported from Calcutta by capitalists, who also supply the funds required for manufacture. Local contractors supply the labour and get a commission on the work done. The usual rate per seer is 15 to 17 annas; while the charge for labour is about 2 annas per piece. The majority of the women in the town and its neighbourhood earn a fair livelihood from the husking of paddy. Rice and vegetables, in fact, form a large proportion of the exports to Calcutta.

The name is said to be derived from *ghāti* (meaning an outpost), Ghātāl being a frontier post with a garrison, that lay between the principalities of Bāgri and Chitwā. Local tradition states that the Rājā of Burdwān defeated the allied forces of the Rājās of Chandrakonā and Bārdā at Ghātāl in 1702. Nimtalā Ghātāl, as it used to be called, was for a long time the seat of the zamīndār of Bārdā, until absorbed by the Burdwān Rāj.

Ghātāl Subdivision.—North-eastern subdivision of the district lying between 22° 28′ and 22° 52′ N., and between 87° 28′ and 87° 53′ E., with an area of 372 square miles. It is the smallest of the subdivisions of Midnapore; Tamlūk being nearly twice, Contāi nearly thrice and the Sadar subdivision nearly ten times as large. It is bounded on the east and north-east by the Howrah and Hooghly districts; on the north-west and west by the Midnapore subdivision; and on the south by the Midnapore and Tamlūk subdivisions.

The subdivision is composed almost entirely of a rich alluvium, but in the north-west corner the soil is partly lateritic, and patches of jungle are found here and there; the Silāi river forms the boundary between the two kinds of soil. Much of its area is liable to floods, and the inhabitants suffer greatly from malarial

affections. Its population was 324,991 in 1901, as compared with 327,902 in 1891, the density being 874 persons to the square mile. It contains 1,042 villages and 5 towns, viz., Ghātāl, its headquarters, Chandrakonā, Khirpāi, Rāmjībanpur and Kharār, all of which are municipalities. There are three thānas, viz., Ghātāl, Dāspur and Chandrakonā.

Gopīballabhpur.—A village in the west of the Midnapore subdivision, situated 35 miles south-west of Midnapore in *pargana* Nayābasān, on the south bank of the river Subarnarekhā. It contains a police-station and a temple dedicated to Govindajī, which is visited by pilgrims on the occasion of Snān-pūrnimā in the month of Jyaistha. The residents are mostly Oriyās, who speak a dialect peculiarly sharp in intonation, which has a large admixture of Santāli and Bengali. It is the home of the Gosāin, who is the general *guru* of the Gaura caste throughout Orissa. The village belongs to the Mayūrbhanj Rāj.

Hijilī.—A village in the Contāi subdivision, situated on the left bank of the Rasūlpur river close to the sea, three miles south of Kedgeree. The name was formerly given to the littoral tract extending from the mouth of the Rūpnārāyan along the right bank of the Hooghly estuary almost as far as Jaleswar in Balasore, which lies a few miles beyond the south-western boundary of Midnapore.

Legendary accounts inform us that about 1505 A.D., at the time when Husain Shāh, king of Bengal, had brought the rebellious Rājās to obedience 'even as far as the frontier of Orissa,' one Tāj Khān Masnad-i-Alī, accompanied by his younger brother Sikandar Pahlwān (*i.e.*, the wrestler), conquered Hijilī, and founded a Muhammadan settlement at the mouth of the Rasūlpur river, where Tāj Khān's tomb still exists. 'Masnad-i-Alī' (which means 'a man of elevated cushion or *gadi*') was a common Afghān title, and often occurs in Bengal inscriptions of the time. It is noticeable that the maps shew a village named Masnad Alīpur due south of Contāi; and the religious zeal of the conquering Musalmāns survives in the names of several villages in the neighbourhood, such as Rasūlpur (prophet's town), Allahdiāpur (God has given it), Burhānpur (the town of the proof), Ghauspur (the town of help), etc.

According to tradition, the conquest was chiefly effected by Sikandar, after whose death Tāj Khān governed the country till 1555 A.D., when, on the approach of an imperial (?) army, he either buried himself alive or drowned himself. His memory is held in high veneration, and his tomb at the mouth of the Rasūlpur river is visited alike by Musalmāns and Hindus

There is a legend current in the neighbourhood that in the great cyclone of 1864, when a storm-wave swept inland inundating the country for miles around, the sea miraculously failed to invade the small tank attached to the mosque. When the storm subsided, the water in it was still sweet and saved many of the people from dying of thirst.

Bahādur Khān, son of Sikandar, made his peace with the invaders, and in 1557 was confirmed in the possession of Hijilī. But a son-in-law of Masnad Alī, Zail Khān, preferred complaints against Bahādur, got him put into prison, and reigned from 1564 till 1574, when Bahādur Khān regained his liberty and authority. On Bahādur's death in 1584, two Hindus, who had been his *Dīwān* and *Sardār*, took possession of the Rāj, which now comprised two extensive zamīndāris, called Jalāmuthā and Majnāmuthā. Bahādur Khān's name explains the existence of Bahādurpur *pargana* in Jalāmuthā.

To leave these misty traditions, it seems certain, though the name "Hijilī" does not appear in the *Aīn-ī-Akbari*, that the *mahāl* of Maljhātā, which was included by Todar Mal in *Sarkār* Jaleswar, corresponded to the greater part of what we now call Hijilī. In the biography of Chaitanya, called *Chaitanya Charitāmrita*, it is related that Gopināth Barajena, the brother of his favourite disciple, Rāmānand Rāi, was in charge of Maljyāthā Dandapāt, that he fell in arrears of revenue to the extent of 200,000 *kāhans* of cowries, and was ordered by the king to be put to death, but was saved and reinstated on the mediation of Chaitanya and his disciples. From this it may be inferred that as late as 1530 A.D. the tract had not been conquered by the Muhammadans. It seems also clear that they could not have established their rule till some years later, for the last Hindu king of Orissa, Mukunda Deva, was in possession of the country as far north as Tribenī. It appears probable that the Maljyātha *mahāl* passed into the hands of the Musalmāns when Sulaimān Kararāni's forces conquered Orissa in 1568 A.D. Their occupation must have been nominal, for within six years the Afghāns became embroiled in a life and death struggle with Akbar. On the annexation of Midnapore district, the tract became nominally tributary to Delhi, and the *mahāl* of Maljhātā, which probably extended from the river Haldi to the boundary of Contāi thāna, finds entry in the *Aīn-ī-Akbarī*. The revenue at which the *mahāl* was assessed amounted to the large sum of Rs. 2,32,957¾, or one-fifth of that of the whole *Sarkār*.

In Prince Shujā's "improved rent-roll" Hijilī was separated from Orissa, and attached under the name of *Sarkār* Māljhāta

to Bengal; but its revenue is put down at only Rs. 1,89,432. This is at first sight somewhat surprising, for it is apparent from the account given by Ralph Fitch in 1586 that by the end of the 16th century Hijilī had become an important emporium. "Not far," he wrote, "from Porto Piqueno south-westward standeth a haven, which is called Angeli, in the country of Orixa. In this place is very much rice, and cloth made of cotton, and great store of cloth, which is made of grass which they call *yerua* : it is like a silk. They make good cloth of it, which they send for India and divers other places. To this haven of Angeli come every year many ships out of India, Negapatam, Sumatra, Malacca, and divers other places, and lade from thence great store of rice and much cloth of cotton wool, much sugar and long pepper, great store of butter, and other victuals for India."

The causes for the decrease of revenue are, however, not far to seek. The Portuguese had occupied the Hijilī island, and sallying forth in their galleys and ships, in combination with the Arakanese pirates, committed serious depredations on the coast, pillaging the villages and carrying away men and women to sell them as slaves. The local authorities were helpless, and the ryots, abandoning their homes and leaving their fields untilled, sought safety in flight. Whole tracts became depopulated ; and local trade was practically brought to a standstill, thus diminishing the revenue seriously. It was this decrease of revenue that forced the Musalmān Government to annex Hijilī to Bengal in order to ensure closer supervision and control.

Some interesting information about the history of Hijilī up to 1661 is given in Valentijn's memoir. He wrote:—"The Governor of Orissa used to hold his court in the great and famous capital Cattek, and the kingdom of Orissa was enlarged by the country or island of Hingeli, which had been for many years under its own chief, but which was conquered by the great Moghul in 1630. In 1660, however, the lawful chief of Hingeli, who since his childhood had been kept a prisoner, found means to escape, and, with the help of his own men, to reconquer the country. But he did not enjoy it for a long time; for in 1661 he was again brought in the power of Eurang Zeeb, with the help of the (Dutch) Company, and was again put in prison, chained, and was a little better looked after than before. The Governor of Oegli, who had assisted in this war as 'Zeevoogd' (Admiral), governed the newly annexed country, though not personally, but represented by a lesser chief. And Prince Shujā (Sjah Sousa) had during his time separated Hijilī from Orissa, and

had appointed a separate governor to it; and it is for this reason alone that Hingeli, which by position belongs to Orissa, is now attached to Bengal. Hingeli was formerly one of our great stations, and the Portuguese also had here their quarters and a church. Rice and other articles were chiefly sold here, as also at Kindua, Kenka and Badrek; but we afterwards abandoned all these places."

The Portuguese were expelled from Hijilī about 1636 soon after their expulsion from Hooghly town. Other European nations stepping into their place, the Dutch and, after them, the English establishing stations for the development of their trade. By 1679 the larger English vessels had begun to load and unload their cargoes here. Hijilī and Balasore now became the chief seaports of Lower Bengal, and Hijilī was so important a centre that, as mentioned by William Hedges in his *Diary*, under date December 17th, 1684, the Portuguese proposed to seize the two islands of 'Kegeria and Ingellee'.

The most important event in the subsequent history of Hijilī is its capture by the English under Charnock in 1787 and its subsequent siege by the Moghul forces. The account given by Mr. C. R. Wilson in the *Early Annals of the English in Bengal* is of so much interest, and gives such a full account of Hijilī itself, that it may be quoted at length. "At the junction of the Rasulpur river with the Hooghly, just opposite the centre of the modern island of Sāgar, is situated the old fort of Hijilī in the district of Qasbā Hijilī; seven and-a-half miles above this on the great river is the town of Khejiri. The Cowcolly lighthouse stands about half-way between the two places, and to the north of Khejiri a slender watercourse, known as the Kunjapur Khāl, runs back from the Hooghly to the Rasulpur river, thus forming the base of an inverted triangle of which the apex is Hijilī. At the present day Qasbā Hijilī is rather an out-of-the-way corner of the world. To get to it by land you must leave the Grand Trunk road, which runs through Midnapore to Orissa, and strike off to the south-west by the way from Belda to Kānthi, a distance of some thirty-five miles. From Kānthi the more ancient and more direct route runs over the sand-hills to Dariāpur at the mouth of the Rasulpur river, whence you may cross straight over to the old town of Hijilī. But the post road passes in a north-easterly direction to Rasulpur, where the river is crossed by a ferry, and from thence continues in a direction almost parallel to the Kunjapur Khāl, but a mile and-a-half to the south of it, till it reaches Khejiri, while a more circuitous path, diverging to the right from the ferry, leads to the same place past the old town of Hijilī, Pāchuriya, and the Cowcolly lighthouse.

"Nij Qasbā Hijilī, all that now remains of the old town, is a somewhat large collection of hovels standing at the junction of the two rivers. Five hundred yards to the west on the Rasulpur river is a landing-place with a bazar. Between this and the village rises the white tower of a mosque, conspicuous for miles away; and by the mosque stands the shrine of Masnad Alī Shāh. Further down to the south, almost completely covered by the water of the river, lie the ruined walls of the old fort. Behind, for some distance up in the apex of the triangle of land included between the Hooghly and the Rasulpur river, rise a number of small sand-hills thickly covered with prickly bamboos and the evergreen Indian oak, from which Hijili is said to take its name. All round beside the rivers, and away towards Khejiri and the Kunjapur Khāl, the land lies low, a great dyke encircling it like the wall of a Roman camp, preventing the influx of the adjacent salt waters and allowing it to be cultivated. Two hundred years ago the land, unprotected by any embankment, was for the most part swamp. So fatally malarious was the spot that the difference between going to Hijilī and returning thence passed into a Hindustani proverb.

"It was, however, a place of the greatest importance, an accessible frontier, a land rich in grain, the seat of the salt manufacture, the private domain of the Moghul, who had the monopoly of the precious mineral extracted from these low-lying swamps by the easy process of filtration and by boiling the brine. The Kunjapur Khāl was then a deep, broad stream, which completely cut off both Khejiri and Hijilī from the main land, and these again were divided into two distinct islands by the river Cowcolly, of which the channel has now completely vanished. Both places were considered 'exceeding pleasant and fruitful, having great store of wild hogs, deer, wild buffaloes, and tigers.' It was an amusing and interesting trip in those days to take a boat at the town of Khejiri and row all round the two islands into the Rasulpur river, and so back to the Hooghly, noting the busy scenes which met you on your way.

"Such was the 'pleasant island in the Ganges' to which the English in 1687 were persuaded to entrust all their fortunes. On the approach of Nicholson, Malik Qāsim, the Moghul Commandant, deserted the place and surrendered all its forts and batteries, all its guns and ammunition, without striking a blow. The island was full of inhabitants and well stocked with cattle. By the 27th February, Charnock had established himself in the town and collected the bulk of his forces round him. They consisted of four hundred and twenty soldiers, the *Beaufort* with her frigate,

and nearly all the Company's sloops, except one, which had been left at Hooghly Point to guard the passage of the river, and another, which remained at Balasore with the *Rochester* and the *Nathaniel*. But the English knew that what had been so easily won might also be as easily lost, unless they took steps to secure their position. Sloops were therefore placed all round the island wherever it was thought likely that a landing might be effected, and the long boats and pinnaces were ordered to keep cruising all night to prevent the people from crossing over to the mainland with their cattle. The so-called fort at Hijilī was a small house surrounded by a thin wall with two or three armed points. It stood in the midst of a grove of trees, and was hemmed in on all sides by a thick town of mud houses. The landing to the west on the Rasulpur river was at least five hundred yards distant, and had to be defended by a separate battery. The English began to look back with regret to their old factory at the Gholghāt in Hooghly, and to think that they might have made a much better fight there."

After describing how Charnock took and sacked Balasore, Mr. Wilson proceeds:—"Aurangzeb was at this time intent upon the taking of Haidarābād. He did not hear of the proceedings of the English till the beginning of March, and then contented himself with calling for the map and ascertaining where such obscure places as Hooghly and Balasore were situated. Shāyista Khān was almost equally unconcerned. He had ordered adequate forces of horse and foot to advance against Hijilī, and he had no doubt that they would reach the place in due course and drive the rash invaders into the sea. At the same time, it was satisfactory to reflect that they had chosen to coop themselves up in the most pestilential swamp in all Lower Bengal, so that they might almost be safely left to stew in their own juice.

"March and April must have been trying months for the English at Hijilī. Day by day the tropical heat grew fiercer; day by day their forces dwindled away, while the numbers of their enemies increased and multiplied. By the beginning of May the supplies of provisions had run very short. Nothing was to be had in the island, but beef and a little fish, a diet scarcely suited to the season of the year. Both ashore and on board the ships, great numbers died daily, the number of soldiers sick being never less than a hundred and eighty. The inhabitants, who had at first been friendly, and with whose assistance alone the necessary fortifications could be completed, either through fear or for want of rice, had begun to leave the island. The local magnate, who had offered to co-operate with Charnock, refused

to give any help. The island was closely beset by the Moghul troops. On the other side of the Rasulpur river, opposite Hijilī, Malik Qāsim had raised a battery which commanded the river, the landing-place, and even the fort. The English were thus forced to resume the offensive. In one sally on to the mainland they carried off fifteen thousand maunds of rice; in another they took the battery, split the great guns, and brought away the small ones, with a large quantity of powder and ammunition. But the respite thus gained was short. The enemy soon returned in increased numbers, erected a larger and more powerful battery than before, beat the ships from their anchorage, and even flung shot into the fort of Hijilī.

"By the middle of May, Abdus Samad, the Nabob's general, arrived at Hijilī. His forces were considerable, amounting to twelve thousand men, and he was entrusted with ample powers to deal with the English as he thought best. He resolved on decisive measures. More batteries were erected along the river wherever it was narrowest, and a furious cannonade opened upon the shipping. Every shot told. The English forces were completely disorganized. On the 28th May, in the afternoon, a detachment of seven hundred Moghul cavalry and two hundred gunners, filled with enthusiasm and *bhāng*, crossed the Rasulpur river at the ferry three miles above the town and surprised an unfinished battery of four field-pieces. The men in charge hastened at once to give notice of the attack, but so vehement was the onset of the enemy that Abdus Samad's horsemen arrived as soon as the news, seized the town, and set it on fire. One of the English officers was cut to pieces as he lay sick in his house, and his wife and child were carried off prisoners. The stables which contained the English horses and the four elephants lately taken in the Nabob's ship, fell an easy prey to the enemy. Already they had lodged themselves within the trenches, but the English hurrying together, after a desperate fight which lasted all the evening, succeeded in saving the fort.

"Charnock's position now seemed altogether desperate. Two hundred of his men he had buried. Scarcely one hundred soldiers, weak with repeated attacks of fever and ague, remained to hold the fort. Out of forty officers only one lieutenant and four sergeants were alive and able to do duty. The *Beaufort* had sprung another great leak, and Nicholson had been compelled to empty her of her guns, ammunition, provisions, and goods, and order her away to careen. None of the ships were more than half manned; and it was evident that unless the fort could be held, and the passage to the landing-place kept open, all would be

lost. Fortunately for the English, there stood half-way between the fort and the river a masonry building, which Charnock had converted into a battery by placing on it two guns and a guard, while the landing-stage itself was similarly protected. As long as these posts could be maintained, Charnock's connection with his base was safe. The next day most of the small craft that had hitherto kept guard round the island were brought into the broad river, the most valuable of the Company's goods placed on ship-board, and more provisions and troops conveyed into the fort. With these men Charnock drove the enemy out of his lines, and for four days maintained his position against overwhelming odds. The courage of the Moghul warriors "went out with their bang"; and though a great many more were landed on the island, and the English were besieged three quarters round, yet the fort and the two batteries which secured the passage to the shipping were still untaken, when, on the first of June, a most welcome relief arrived in the shape of seventy men fresh from Europe under the command of Captain Denham.

"The tide of war had turned; the timely reinforcement saved Charnock. The new troops were full of life and spirit. The day after their arrival Denham sallied out of the fort, beat the enemy from their guns, burnt their houses, and returned having lost only one man. A bright idea occurred to Charnock. Seeing what a strong effect the arrival of the reinforcement had produced upon the minds of the enemy, he determined to repeat it. Accordingly, he quietly dropped his sailors by one or two at a time out of the fort, and sent them down to the landing place, whence the whole body was ostentatiously marched up again in all the panoply of war, flags flying, drums beating, trumpets sounding, and the men huzzaing loudly as they had done on the first day of their arrival. 'In war,' as the great Napoleon used to say, 'the moral is to the physical force as three parts to one.' The effect of Charnock's device was instantaneous. The enemy, supposing that the English were somehow supplied with a constant succession of recruits, began to despair of shaking their position. On the 4th June, in the morning, they held out a flag of truce, and Charnock was informed that Abdus Samad wished to treat for peace.

"A cessation of arms was agreed upon; and Charnock, having duly received a hostage from the enemy, sent over Richard Trenchfield, who seems to have been on more friendly terms with the Indian officials than the other servants of the Company, to open the negotiations. On the 6th June Macrith and Jolland were united with Trenchfield in a commission which was entrusted

with full powers to conclude peace, two more hostages were taken from the enemy, and the three men were sent over to Abdus Samad. They were instructed to insist as much as possible on the ratification of the twelve articles drawn up at Sutānutī and on the surrender of those who infringed the Company's monopoly, but in any case to conclude a peace as best they could. In three days the terms were settled and ratified. On the 10th June the Moghul commander entered the fort, and the next day the English, taking with them all their ammunition and artillery, marched out of the place which they had so gallantly held for more than three months, with drums beating and colours flying."

Subsequently, we find that in 1758 the Select Committee at Fort William, fearing the approach of a French fleet, ordered that the pagoda at "Ingelie" should be washed black, the great tree at the place cut down and the buoys removed.

It is interesting to note here the more important physical changes which took place in this locality during the 18th century. Valentijn's map (*circa* 1670), Bowrey's chart (1688), and the pilot chart of 1703, all show two islands in a bay, with a river running inland. Gradually the bay filled up, and the stream separating the two islands also became silted up. In this way both the islands were joined to the mainland, and with each other, and it is clear that this change had taken place by Rennell's time (1779).

Towards the close of the 18th century an interesting account of Hijilī and its salt manufacture was given by Mr. J. Grant, Chief Sarishtādār of Bengal, who included it in the Sundarbans. He estimated the area of Hijilī at 1,098 British square miles, and said that the country 'is of great importance as an accessible frontier, rich in its produce of grain, but still more valuable as productive of more than one-third of the necessary quantity of salt manufactured and consumed annually within the whole British dominions dependent on Fort William.' He confirmed the remark made by Valentijn that Hijilī was attached to Bengal during the reign of Shāh Jahān. In 1707, the year in which Aurangzeb died, the *jamā* of the 28 *parganas* constituting Hijilī amounted to Rs. 3,41,384, inclusive of Rs. 43,565 on account of salt duties. In Jāfar Khān's rent-roll, Hijilī and Tamlūk were annexed to *Chaklā* Hooghly, and formed one *ihtimām*, or trust, held by a Brāhman of the name of Sukh Deb. The whole was divided into 38 *parganas*, with a rental of Rs. 4,77,947, which included the same amount as above on account of salt duties. Two classes of land were recognized, viz., *madhur* or arable, and *nimakin* or salt land. The former was protected by embankments

called *bahrībandī*, running parallel to, and at some distance from, the rivers and numerous inlets intersecting the territory. The salt lands were those portions which were exposed to the overflowing of the tides, where mounds of earth strongly impregnated with salt were formed, which constituted *khālāris* or working places. Each *khālārī* was estimated to yield annually 233 maunds of salt, and required the labour of seven Malangīs. The salt was obtained by filtration, and by boiling the brine with firewood collected from the neighbouring jungle; the operations were only carried on from November till the beginning of June, when the Malangīs retired to the *madhur* lands for ordinary cultivation. Their wages depended on their diligence, as they were paid 'at the rate of 22 rupees for every hundred maunds extraordinary weight of salt produced.' They held their *madhur* lands free of rent or on easy terms, under the denomination of *chākrān*. The number of *khālārīs* was about 4,000, and the crown rent, at the rate of Rs. 11 for each, yielded the above sum of Rs. 43,565. The nominal selling price of salt at Hooghly was Rs. 60 for every hundred maunds, and the difference between the selling price and the prime cost (Rs. 22) fell into the hands of ministers, favourite servants, or merchants, who transported the salt and acquired much wealth through an authorized but oppressive monopoly.

The name Hijilī appears under a number of forms in the early European accounts. Thus we find Ingili (Gastaldi), Angeli (De Barros, Purchas and De Laet), Hingeli (Van den Broucke), Angelin (Clavell), Ingerley (Streynsham Masters), Ingelee (Hedges and Rennell), Ingellee (Hedges), Ingilee (Bowrey), Hidgley (Charnock), Kedgelie (Pilot, chart of 1703) and Hedgjelee (Grant).

Jalāmuthā.—A temporarily-settled estate with an area of 168 square miles. It comprises 10 *parganas*, of which three, viz., Erinch, Baindā Bazar, and Bisuān are contained in one block; four others, viz., Kālindī Bālsāi, Gaomesh, Bhograi and Khālsa Bhogrāi, are contained in another block; while the remaining three *parganas*, Jalāmuthā, Pahārpur and Keorāmal-Nayābād, are detached from each other as well as from the rest of the estate. Eight of the 10 *parganas* of the estate are situated inland; the other two, viz., Bisuān and Kālindī Bālsāi, border on the river Hooghly and on the Bay of Bengal, respectively, and are protected from salt water inundations by the great sea-dyke of Hijilī.

The estate came under the control of the East India Company's Government in 1761, and then comprised 13 *parganas* in

Faujdāri Hijilī. The property appears to have descended from Rām Chandra Chaudhri, who held it between 1694 and 1734, to his nephew Lakshmi Nārāyan Chaudhri, who died in 1763, when his son Bīr Nārāyan succeeded. The latter was succeeded in 1781 by his son Nar Nārāyan Rai, who lived up to 1833, when he gave place to his eldest son, Rudra Nārāyan Rai, who died the following year, leaving the property to his minor sons, Krishna Indra Nārāyan Rai and Kunwār Nārāyan Rai, with his widow Rāni Krista Priyā as guardian. When the younger son attained his majority, he claimed a half share of the estate, while the elder set up a claim of impartibility. Protracted litigation ensued and ultimately a decree was obtained dividing the estate between them in equal shares.

In 1878 the parties in possession were Srīmatyā Hari Priyā Debī, the Kunwār's widow, and Srīmatyā Ānanda Mayī Debī, widow of Gajendra Nārāyan Rāi, who had succeeded his father, Krishna Indra Nārāyan, in 1854. In 1880 the proprietors having declined to accept a settlement of the estate at the revenue fixed during the resettlement, or to state the highest *jamā* for which they would engage, the estate was brought under direct State (*khās*) management, the proprietors being allowed *mālikānā*.

It is unnecessary to follow the vicissitudes to which the estate was subjected from one cause and another during the earlier period of its history. It will be sufficient to say that up to 1801 Jalāmuthā comprised 13 *parganas*. In that year an attempt was made to settle the whole permanently; but the zamīndār, Nar Nārāyan Rai, accepted the offer only as regards three *parganas*, viz., Bhaitgarh, Bāhirimutā and Dakshinmal. They were accordingly detached from the parent estate, which has ever since consisted of 10 *parganas* only. From 1801 to 1845 the estate was sometimes farmed for a few years, sometimes held *khās*, and sometimes leased to the proprietor, according as the circumstances at the time rendered practicable. In 1845 it was regularly settled with the proprietors for a term which was to expire in 1866; but the proprietors having defaulted, the estate was taken over by Government in 1851 and retained under *khās* management for the remaining 15 years of the settlement. In 1866 the estate was settled with the proprietors temporarily for one year on substantially the same terms as at the settlement of 1845, and in 1867 the estate was temporarily settled for five years on the same conditions as before, pending a regular detailed remeasurement and reassessment which were in contemplation. In 1874-77 a settlement was made by Mr. J. C. Price, the term of

which expired in 1900; and a fresh survey and settlement is now in progress.

Jāmbani Estate.—An estate in the west of the district consisting of the whole of the Jāmbani *pargana* in the Jungle Mahāls. The estate is about 14 miles in length and 7 in breadth with an area of 110 square miles. It forms a portion of the valley of the Dalang river, which rises in the hills on the north-west corner of the district and falls into the Subarnarekhā a little below Gopīballabhpur. It belongs to a family bearing the title of Dhal. In 1852 the proprietor was Māngovinda Dhal, who, being involved in debt, mortgaged the estate to a zamīndār of Mānbhūm. It was under the management of the Court of Wards from 1862 to 1881 during the minority of its proprietor, Iswar Chandra Dhal. A report on the estate submitted in 1874-75 describes its tenures as follows:—"There are few *lākhirāj* and *maurasi* tenures in the estate, but the general plan here, as in all the Jungle Mahāls, is that the cultivators never settle direct with the zamīndār, but always through a *mandal* or village headman. These middlemen claim various privileges, sometimes amounting to permanent rights at fixed rents, but in Jāmbani they simply receive two annas on every *bighā* cultivated, which covers their claim to a share in the profits as well as their cost of collection. The idea would be scouted of endeavouring to establish a village without procuring a *mandal*, but the *mandal*, once obtained, manages everything. The condition of the tenantry is satisfactory. They, like the tenantry of all other Jungle Mahāls, retain a strong feudal attachment for their chief, and are consequently easily managed. They pay their rents without any demur and are on good terms with the farmers, who on their side make good and liberal landlords on the whole."

Jamirāpāl.—A small estate, with an area of about 10 square miles, situated about 33 miles south-west of Midnapore on the banks of the Subarnarekhā. It is a *shikmi tāluk* held under the Nayāgrām zamīndār, this arrangement being said to be due to the following circumstances. Before the establishment of British rule the Nayāgrām and Jamirāpāl estates were separate, and their zamīndārs were feudatories of the Rājā of Mayūrbhanj, from whom they received the titles of Mangrāj Bhuiyā and Pāikarā Bhuiyā respectively. They remained under the control of the Marāthās till some time after the Permanent Settlement, and were only given up and annexed to Hijilī at the same time as Patāspur, viz., in 1803. When the estate came under settlement neither of the Bhuiyās put in an appearance: and Hara Singh, the chief *āmlā* of the Nayāgrām zamīndār, got the estates

of Dippa Kiarchānd, Nayāgrām and Jamirāpāl settled in the name of his master, Parsurām Singh. The zamīndār of Jamirāpāl having heard of this, submitted a petition to the Settlement Officer for the cancellation of the settlement, and was directed to institute a regular suit. When he was about to do so, the zamīndār of Nayāgrām proposed, as a compromise, that he should submit a petition to the Settlement Officer declaring that he had no right to, or possession in, the estate of Jamirāpāl, and that it should remain as already entered in the Collectorate roll, but that its zamīndār should hold it and pay the revenue to Government in his name. This arrangement appears to have been accepted, save that the revenue is paid through the Nayāgrām zamīndār, but he gets no profit as *mālikānā* on it.

Jhārgrām Estate.—A large estate consisting of *parganas* Jhārgrām and Chiārā, and of Kānchannagar, a small *mahāl* in the Jungle Mahāls. *Pargana* Jhārgrām, which is about 18 miles long and, on an average, about 10 miles wide, or about 172 square miles in area, is almost the most jungly of the Jungle Mahāls. Its soil is entirely lateritic, a large portion of it being still covered with *sāl* jungle, while the tenants are mostly Santāls and other aboriginal tribes. Recently, however, it has been considerably developed owing to the Bengal-Nagpur Railway passing through it, and the *sāl* trees, mostly of stunted growth, are being gradually removed. The other *pargana*, *i.e.*, Chiārā, is about 22 square miles in area and is situated on the south of Jhārgrām; it is intersected at its southern extremity by the Dalang river, beyond which it abuts on the Subarnarekhā. It is flat and almost entirely under rice cultivation. The estate was at first dependent on the zamīndāri of Midnāpore, paying a nominal rent. In 1767 it was brought under control by Lieutenant Fergusson and assessed with a separate revenue. It was settled not *mahālwāri* but in its entirety, as it was covered with jungle and inhabited sparsely by aboriginal tribes.

The estate was taken under the management of the Court of Wards on the death of the titular Rājā of Jhārgrām in 1875. He left two grandsons, viz., Raghu Nāth Nārāyan Malla and Jadu Nāth Nārāyan Malla, of whom the former inherited the property, by the custom of primogeniture prevailing in the family. As, however, as there was no one in the family to manage the estate, it was taken over by the Court of Wards. The estate was released on Raghu Nāth Nārāyan Malla attaining his majority in 1886, but was again taken over in 1907. A report submitted in 1875-76 describes the tenures in the estate as follows:—" The

village system obtains throughout the entire estate, each village having a *mandal* who contracts for the rent with the zamīndār, paying, according to custom, 80 per cent. of the aggregate rent of the village. Besides these tenures, there are a considerable number of *kamdura* villages leased out at a nominal rent as a maintenance. The greater number of these, called *Bābuāni mauzās*, are allotted to the illegitimate relations of the Rājās, who are locally called Bābus, and a few are also given to servants, *āmlā* and others. Most of the service done to the Rājā by *pālki*-bearers, guards, barbers, etc., was paid for in assignments of land rent-free."

Jungle Mahāls.—A term applied in the 18th century to the territory lying between Bīrbhūm, Bānkurā, Midnapore and the hilly country of Chotā Nāgpur. In order to co-ordinate the system of administration in this tract, a regulation (Regulation XVIII of 1805) was passed in 1805 by which the tracts, called the Jungle Mahāls, situated in the *zilās* of Bīrbhūm, Burdwān and Midnapore, were detached from the jurisdiction of the Magistrates of those *zilās*, and placed under the jurisdiction of an officer called the Magistrate of the Jungle Mahāls. The district thus formed was composed of 23 *parganas* and *mahāls*, of which seven were transferred from Midnapore, viz., Chhātnā, Barābhūm, Mānbhūm, Supur, Ambikānagar, Simlāpāl and Bhalaidihā. After the Bhumij rebellion of 1832 a change of administration was determined upon, and by Regulation XIII of 1833 the district of the Jungle Mahāls was broken up, the greater part of it being formed into the district of Mānbhūm.

In Midnapore the name still survives; it is applied to the western and northern portion of the district comprised in thānas Binpur, Garhbetā, Gopīballabhpur, Jhārgrām and Sālbani. This tract is divided among several large land-owners, among whom may be mentioned the Midnapore Zamīndāri Company in Garhbetā, Sālbani, and the large *pargana* of Sildā; the Rāmgarh and Lālgarh Rājās west of the Kasāi; the Rājā of Jhārgrām in the Jhārgrām *pargana*, which covers the greater part of the Jhārgrām thāna; the Mahārājā of Mayūrbhanj, who owns Nayābasān and Rohinī in Gopīballabhpur; and the Nawāb of Murshidābād in the *parganas* of Nayāgrām and Khelārgrām in the east of Gopīballabhpur.

The following description of the Jungle Mahāls as they were at the close of the 18th century is quoted from the Fifth Report (pages 767-68, Madras reprint, 1883):—"Within the district of Midnapore there existed a considerable extent of forest country,

called the Jungle Mehals; the inhabitants of these wilds are little better than savages, and their only principle of obedience seems to be their devotion to their native chiefs. Without sufficient attention to their peculiar character, this people had been included in the general system of internal administration. The immediate authority over them was given to police dārogās, and by the operation of selling estates for revenue balances, many of their zamīndārs had been dispossessed. The effects of this violence on the habits of the people were felt by degrees. They sided with the discarded zamīndārs, contemned the authority of the police officers, and were frequently guilty of great disorders. The mischief, however, had excited no particular attention, and might long have escaped observation, when at last some more than ordinary mismanagement drove them into open insurrection. Fortunately, at this critical juncture, Mr. Henry Strachey was selected to take charge of the district. His discernment and activity quickly discovered, and efficaciously applied, the proper remedy. Many of the zamīndārs were brought back, and secured in their estates, their confidence was acquired, and their influence employed to manage the inhabitants. The fruit of these judicious measures was soon seen in reviving tranquillity."

Regarding the methods of cultivation in the Jungle Mahāls Mr. Bayley, the Collector of Midnapore, wrote in 1852:—"The cultivators in this jungle formerly held their fields (*jots*) in some parts without leases, rent papers, etc. They brought the whole produce to the zamindar, who gave them means of support during the year. They were contented, industrious, brave, truthful, and confiding, much attached to their proprietors. But if they were oppressed in any particular direction, a whole village would literally in one night 'up stick'* and off to some zamīndār, whose general character promised them better treatment. They have not that half-superstitious, half-habitual fondness for their forefathers' fields which characterizes the more civilized and crafty people of the plains. But those of the jungle men who have come in frequent contact with the agents of chicanery surrounding our courts seem to lose their truthful and confiding disposition, though still being so far exceptional that they show shame of their falsehood when discovered."

Kānchanpur.—A village in the Contāi subdivision, situated 13 miles north of Contāi. It contains the ruins of an old fort said to have been built in the reign of the Emperor Shāh Alam. In the middle of the ruins lies a stone statue

* "Their huts are made of sticks and leaves intertwined. The sticks alone, going useful elsewhere, are removed."

representing a warrior, with an inscription said to be in Persian characters. There is also a mosque, said to have been built in the reign of Aurangzeb, in the inner wall of which is an inscription on a marble tablet which cannot be deciphered.

Karnagarh.—A village in the Midnapore subdivision, situated 6 miles north of Midnapore. It contains the remains of a fort, with a silted up ditch and the fragments of a parapet wall. The fort is said to have been built by Rājā Mahābīr Singh about 500 years ago. His grandson Jaswant Singh was the most famous of the Rājās of Karnagarh, and the temple built over his ashes is still shewn to the pilgrim. The fort contains a tank, in the centre of which there is a building made of stone. There are many temples in and about the ruins in various stages of dilapidation, from most of which the images have been removed.

Two temples, about a mile from the fort, are in a state of fair preservation, viz., the shrines of Dandeswar and Mahāmāyā. They are situated close to each other and are surrounded by a wall, about 10 feet high, which is built of cut stones and has three gates, of which those to the east and west are the most important. On the east gate, which is the main entrance, there is a *naubatkhānā*. Over the west gate, which faces the temple of Dandeswar, there is a stone structure, called the Jogi Mandap, *i.e.*, a place for the practice of *yoga*, which is a three-storied building about 75 feet high. The temple of Mahāmāyā is about 36 feet high, and the temple of Dandeswar, in one chamber of which there is another symbol of Siva named Khargeswar, is about 75 feet high. In the latter shrine there is a cavity, about 3 feet in diameter and 8 feet deep, containing the emblem of the deity. The goddess Mahāmāyā stands on a lotus-leaved pedestal, and is draped in fine muslin.

Karnagarh was the seat of the Midnapore Rāj family for some time. In the Chuār rebellion of 1799 it was occupied by the Chuārs and rebel *pāiks;* and the Rānī was suspected of being in league with them. The fort was therefore taken possession of by the British sepoys, and the Rānī herself sent to Midnapore as a prisoner.

Kasbā.—See Egrā.

Kāukhāli.—A village in the Contāi subdivision, situated on the sea-coast, 4 miles north of Hijilī and 3 miles south of Khejrī (Kedgeree). There is a lighthouse here, which was the first lighthouse built on the Hooghly. It was erected in 1810 to guide vessels into the Kedgeree roads, and is still useful to passenger steamers of light draft going down the western

channel to Chāndbāli. It is a massive brick structure, 80 feet high, which has weathered four storm-waves. A marble slab over the front door shows the height to which the water rose during the cyclone of 1864, viz., 13½ feet above the level of the land. The name Cowcolly is an English transliteration of Kaukhāli.

Formerly the Hooghly estuary formed at Hijilī a bay that contained two islands, viz., Hijilī and, north of it, Khejrī (Kedgeree). The Hijilī island had Cowcolly at its north point. Bowrey's chart of 1688 A.D. shows the place as Cuckolee; and in the pilot chart of 1703 the river separating Kedgeree island from Hijilī is called Coucolly.

Kedgeree.—See Khejrī.

Kesiāri.—A village in the Midnapore subdivision, situated 16 miles north-west of Kharagpur. It contains a police outpost and a District Board bungalow, and was formerly an important centre of the tusser silk industry. As far back as 1676, W. Clavell, in his account of the trade of Balasore, noticed that the waters of "Casharry" gave the most lasting dye to tusser silk. In 1852, 800 to 900 families of weavers were said to reside here, but the number has been steadily declining.

Mahāl Kesiāri is apparently the same as *mahāl* Siyāri of the *Aīn-i-Akbarī*, the first letter having been dropped in the MSS. It was a rather important Mughal *tahsīl*, or settlement, forming a *pargana* of *Sarkār* Jaleswar, near which ran the old Pādshāhi road. Mosques and stone houses erected by the Mughals are still extant in the Mughalpārā or Mughal quarter. One of them bears an Arabic inscription showing that it was erected in the time of Aurangzeb and a stone figure of a Muhammadan king or saint, with a Persian inscription on it, lies on the ground in the middle of the ruins.

Talkesiāri, a short distance to the south, contains a mosque said to have been built in the time of Shāh Alam. It is a fine building of stone, which is in a ruined state but is still used by the local Muhammadans. Other remains are found in the neighbourhood at Kānchanpur and Gaganeswar, which are described in the articles on those places.

Kharagpur.—A town in the Midnapore subdivision, 8 miles south of Midnapore, with which it is connected both by rail and road. The railway station here is an important junction of the Bengal-Nāgpur Railway, for the East Coast section runs south to Madras, while the main line connects Calcutta with Bombay, and a branch line runs north to Bānkurā and Adra.

Kharagpur is the head-quarters of the Loco. Carriage and Wagon Departments of the Bengal-Nāgpur Railway. The

workshops cover an area of 77 acres, of which 9 acres are roofed in. They contain an electric power-house, in which is generated the current for working the machinery, as well as the lights and fans of the bungalows of the railway staff. The population in the railway premises alone was 3,526 in 1901. In the native quarter of the town there is a shrine of a Muhammadan saint called Pīr Lohāni, which is venerated by Hindus as well as Muhammadans.

Kharagpur is also the name of a *pargana* having an area of 44·4 square miles. It was a *mahāl* of *Sarkār* Jaleswar in the *Āīn-i-Akbarī*, from which we learn that it contained a strong fort in the midst of wooded hills and supplied a force of 500 footmen and matchlock-men. On the formation of *Sarkār* Goālpārā in the time of Prince Shāh Sujah, it was transferred to that division with several other *parganas* of Jaleswar. In the early days of British rule the *pargana* was held by Sundar Nārāyan, zamīndār of Kāsijora, but at the Decennial Settlement, owing to arrears of revenue, it was settled with Bipraprasād Dās, the Sadar Chaudhuri, or chief collecting officer, of the district. The latter died without issue, and the disputes which arose between his widows, led to the sale of the property in 1837, when Government purchased it and made a settlement under Regulation VII of 1822. The *pargana* is an upland tract without facilities for natural irrigation; it is supplied with water from the Midnapore canal and its distributaries.

Kharār.—A town in the Ghātāl subdivision, situated 6 miles north of Ghātāl. It was constituted a municipality in 1888 and contained a population of 9,508 in 1901. Brass and bell-metal ware are manufactured on an extensive scale (see pages 126-127).

Khejrī (Kedgeree).—A village in the Contāi subdivision, situated on the right bank of the river Hooghly, 16 miles north-west of Contāi Population (1901), 1,457. There was formerly an important anchorage here, *i.e.*, in the days when the adjoining roads were capable of sheltering ships; and the place was used for the debarkation of passengers proceeding to Calcutta. It is described as follows by Mr. H. G. Reaks, Assistant River Surveyor:—

"With the rise of Calcutta, Kedgeree, being a fairly sheltered anchorage at the head of open-sea navigation, became an important station. The journey up the river to Calcutta was considered too tedious and dangerous for the larger vessels, and these accordingly lay in the roads at Kedgeree, and there unshipped and shipped cargo and passengers, who were brought to and from Calcutta in sloops. An Agent's house and port office were

built, and a town grew up rapidly with taverns for the accommodation of passengers waiting for their vessels. The following advertisement from the *Calcutta Gazette* indicates how considerable the place had become by the end of the 18th century:—'For sale by auction on the 29th May 1792 a large upper-roomed house and premises situated at Kedgeree, containing a hall, four bedrooms, and an open verandah, standing on 8 *bighās* of ground, more or less.'

"Communication with Calcutta in those days was maintained entirely by boats. Fast rowing pinnaces went out from Kedgeree to meet incoming vessels and receive the earliest news from Europe for the various newspapers which flourished in Calcutta, and naturally there were exciting races to town to secure the first publication of the news. Later, a string of semaphores, which transmitted messages by the movement of arms, was established. This, of course, was entirely superseded by the introduction of the electric telegraph in 1852, but some of the towers may still be seen on the banks of the river, as at Brul, Dhaja and Hooghly Point. Communication with Calcutta must have been fairly easy in 1784, as an advertisement on the 19th of August of that year states that 'John Lambe, a midshipman belonging to the *Berrington*, eloped from the said ship at Kedgeree about the 20th of July last and soon after was seen in Calcutta.' In 1836 Custom House officers boarded incoming ships at Kedgeree and left them there on their outward journey. The channel continued along the shore till 1864, when it shifted to mid-river, and since then Kedgeree anchorage and channel have steadily deteriorated. With the desertion of the vessels, Kedgeree immediately lost importance, and a tidal semaphore and an occasional bazar are the only things of living interest in the place.

"There are at the present time two large brick buildings, one a Public Works Department bungalow and the other used as a post office, through which a daily service by *dāk* runners is maintained with Kukrāhāti and Diamond Harbour. The chief historical attraction is a well-preserved cemetery enclosed within a wall situated at the back of the post office; and, till quite recently, the numerous tombs, some of considerable size and striking appearance, showed the past importance of the town. A few years ago the earliest inscription which could be found was on a detached and broken slab, dated 1800 and to the memory of the boatswain of a ship, but some of the graves without inscriptions were probably of an earlier date. At present there are 33 tombs, twenty-one with inscriptions, the most ancient of which is as follows:—'To the memory of Mr. Neil McInnes, late midshipman

of the Honourable Company's ship *Dunira*. Died 10th September 1818. Aged 16 years.' In front of the post office a large gun spiked, which was formerly the signal gun of the place, may be seen close by the remains of the old signal mast. Besides these, a ruined well and some traces of the ruins of houses are all that remain of the once flourishing town of Kedgeree." *

The slab with the oldest inscription above mentioned bore the name of M. W. Caird, boatswain of the East India Company's Marine, who died on 2nd September 1800, aged 24. The earliest death recorded at Kedgeree is that of George Guy, a councillor of the New English Company, who died at Kedgeree Point on 20th September 1699.†

In the old European accounts Kedgeree is mentioned under various names. It lay on an island just north of Hijilī Island and separated from it by a narrow stream. This island appears in Valentijn's map (1664 A.D.), Bowrey's Chart (1688), and the Pilot Chart of 1703; while Streynsham Master referred to it as Kedgeree in December 1876. On 11th March 1683, Mr. W. Hedges, on arriving at "Kegaria" went on shore in a boat, and landed at an old ruined castle with mud walls and thatched roof. He saw it mounted one small iron gun and an iron pateraro (*i.e.*, a swivel gun). He found the island exceedingly pleasant and fruitful, with great store of wild hogs, deer, wild buffalo, and tigers. Gradually the intervening belt of water was silted up, and Khejrī, like Hijilī, became united with the mainland and the other island, this junction taking place before the compilation of Rennell's Atlas (1779).

With Hijilī it was included in Maljyātha, a large *mahāl* mentioned in the *Āīn-i-Akbarī*, and it subsequently formed part of *pargana* Kasbā Hijilī. Before the British established their rule, Kasbā Hijilī had come into the possession of the zamīndār of Doro Dumnān but was lightly assessed, the greater part of the land being impregnated with salt or covered with grass and fit for pasturage only.

Khīrpāi.—A town in the Ghātāl subdivision, situated 7 miles east of Chandrakonā. It lies almost midway on the road between Chandrakonā and Ghātāl, and the Burdwān-Orissa road also passes through it. It was constituted a municipality in 1876 and contained a population of 5,045 in 1901. The number of its inhabitants was 8,046 in 1872, the decrease being due to the ravages of Burdwān fever.

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* Bengal Past and Present, Vol. II, No. 2, April 1908.

† Hedges' *Diary*, Vol. II, p. 206.

Its chief industry is cloth-weaving, a considerable number of the population being weavers. The industry, which was formerly of greater importance, owed its development to European enterprise. In the eighteenth century the English had a large commercial factory for cotton and silk fabrics at Khīrpāi, while the Dutch used to send agents for their purchase. It also contained a French factory, a report submitted by the English Resident at Khīrpāi in 1784 stating as follows :—" Since the peace of 1763 the French had a factory in the Town of Keerpoy, where their Resident lives, and provided goods annually from the year 1766 to the year 1774, when he quitted the Factory, from which time to the breaking out of the last war their investment was provided by Gomastahs and other Agents; they had also a kotty in the year 1767. In 1768 Mr. Chevalier's Gomastahs imported in cash and merchandize to the amount of near a lack of rupees; with this Fund they conducted their business till the end of 1770. In 1771 they began to collect their outstanding balances, and in 1773 they removed their effects, and left the Aurung. During the term that the French trade was carried on by Mr. Chevalier's Agent, a decree of authority, unknown to the Gomastahs of the dadney merchants, was increased on their part; and, in consequence, many complaints were preferred against them to the principal at the English Factory." *

Kiārchānd.—A plain situated six miles north-west of Kesiāri and about one mile east of Kultikri, in thāna Gopīballabhpur. There are about a thousand small pillars, varying in height from 2 to 4 feet, scattered over the surface of the plain. The lower extremities of the pillars have been driven into the ground and the upper rounded into a rough semblance of human heads. It is said that Jahar Singh, a Hindu chief who ruled at Kiārchānd about the year 1170 B.S. (1763 A.D.), set them up as a device to frighten away his opponents, the pillars being taken to be so many men in his service. They are more probably, however, monumental stones erected by aboriginals, similar to those found in Chotā Nāgpur, the Nāgā Hills and elsewhere.

Mahishādal.—An estate extending over almost the whole of *parganas* Mahishādal, Tirupārā, Kāsīnagar, Gumāi, Aurangnagar, Gumgarh, Natshal, and Tamlūk. With an area of 323 square miles, it is one of the largest estates in the district; it lies mostly in the Tamlūk subdivision. The estate formed a part of *kismat* Māljyāthā in the rent-roll of Prince Shāh Shuja, and, in

* Bengal Past and Present, Vol. III, No. 2, p. 367.

the revised rent-roll of Murshīd Kuli Khān, it was attached to the zamīndāri of Tamlūk. At the Permanent Settlement the estate was included in the Faujdāri of Hijilī and was settled with Rānī Jānakī.

According to the family records this estate belonged originally to one Busiā Rai Mahāpātra, whose sixth descendant, Kalyān Rai, fell into arrears of revenue, and furnished as security one Janārdan Upādhyāya, who ultimately ousted him from his zamīndāri. After him came Durjan, Rāmeswar, Rājārām, Sukh Lāl and Anand Lāl, all Upādhyāyas. The last died in 1765, and was succeeded by his widow Rānī Jānakī, who died in 1804. There are two conflicting accounts as to the devolution of the property after her death.

According to a report sent by the Collector, she had adopted a son named Mati Lāl Pānde, who became blind as a result of small-pox and executed a deed of gift in favour of one Guru Prasād Garga. The latter was succeeded by his widow Rānī Mantharā, she by Raghu Mohan Garga, he by Bhawānī Prasād Garga, and the latter in his turn by Kālī Prasād Garga, all of whom died premature deaths. Then, with the permission of Government, Jagannāth Garga succeeded to the Rāj. But owing to the estate having passed through so many hands during a very short period, the property had been mismanaged and there had been no regular registration of the proprietor's name in the Collectorate records. The Collector therefore took *khās* possession of the estate. Jagannāth, however, having succeeded in proving himself to be the legal heir of Rānī Mantharā, had his name registered and recovered the property. He died in 1822 and was succeeded by his son Rām Nāth Garga, during whose minority his mother Rānī Indrānī managed the property. Rām Nāth died in 1841 and his wife Rānī Bimalā performed *sati*. Then, by virtue of a will executed by Rām Nāth, an adopted son of Rānī Bimalā named Lakshman Prasād succeeded to the property.

A different account is given by the then Collector, Mr. H. V. Bayley, in the *Memoranda of Midnapore* (1852), which is interesting as showing the violence and intrigues resorted to by rival claimants. "At her decease Rānī Jānaki intended to have left the property to Mati Lāl Pahra, who took the title of Upādhyāya as the Rānī's adopted son. The Diwān of the family, Rām Kumār Barm, refused to acknowledge Mati Lāl, and in the absence of the latter at Midnapore rifled the house and took off two boys, Bhawāni Prasād Garga and Kālī Prasād Garga, with a view to make one of them the Rājā. Mati Lāl eventually lost

his cause in all the courts, Privy Council included: by the same token that the Collectorate books still show Rs. 40,000 costs as due for this suit, and we are proceeding against the security for their recovery, while his son was lately the coachman to Mr. Molloy in Calcutta. While prosecuting this cause, Mati Lāl was said to have been thrown into the river near Kidderpore out of his boat with his title-deeds, the boatman being bribed by Rām Kumār Barm, but he was saved by some fisherman's nets, and prosecuted Rām Kumār Barm and others criminally in the Supreme Court, by orders of which they were condemned to the pillory.

"About this time Rājā Rām Lochan of Andul, one who had assisted Lord Clive, brought to the notice of Government that a title without land was useless, on which Government promised him the first escheated estate. He pointed to Mahishādal, alleging that Rānī Jānakī had no heir. On Rānī Jānakī being called upon to certify to this, she stated that she had adopted Mati Lāl. On this, Rājā Rām Lochan's views upon Mahishādal ceased. But the Secretary of the time is said to have shewn Rām Kumār Barm the statement of Rānī Jānakī as opposed to his (the Barm's) purposes. On which Rām Kumār tore it out of the book in which it was filed, and swallowed it. Thus Mati Lāl's only title-deed being disposed of, Rām Kumār Barm set up Jagannāth Garga, a younger brother of the Gargas before mentioned, as Rājā; and executed a deed for himself, in which the Rājā was purported to have assigned a 3-anna share of all the profits of the estate, and a like share of the house and goods and chattels, to him, and to have provided that the Barm was not to be responsible for any charges or losses. These supplementary provisions were set aside, but the main condition of a 3-anna share of the zamīndāri was upheld in all the courts.

"Rām Kumār Barm died in 1838 or 1839 A.D. after executing various successful forgeries in the rent-free records of this office, and in the Carcoon Daftar papers of the Board of Revenue. His son was drowned near Hooghly the year after when drunk, and the widows sold their rights and interests to Rānī Indrāni, the guardian and manager for Rām Nāth Garga, the son of her husband Jagannāth Garga, who died in 1834 A.D. Rām Nāth Garga died in 1840 A.D.—it is supposed a *sati* of his widow took place near Agarpārā on a *char* in the river at night—and was succeeded by Lakshman Prasād Garga, his adopted son."

Lakshman Prasād opened a High English school and a Charitable Dispensary at Mahishādal and died in 1880. He left three sons, Iswarī Prasād, Jyoti Prasād and Rām Prasād. Rām Prasād, who was given the title of Rājā, died in 1886, Iswarī Prasād in

1888 and Jyoti Prasād in 1901. Iswarī Prasād left two sons, Sati Prasād Garga and Gopāl Prasād Garga, of whom the elder Sati Prasād succeeded to the property. The title of Rājā was bestowed on him in 1907.

Majnāmuthā.—A large temporarily-settled estate comprising 11 *parganas*. For practical purposes it may be described as composed of two parts, one consisting of the large *pargana* of Doro Dumnān, which contains about one-third of the entire estate, and the other consisting of Majnāmuthā proper (which contains another one-third) and the remaining 9 *parganas* grouped round it, which together are not quite as large as Majnāmuthā or Doro Dumnān alone. Doro Dumnān, which lies along the estuary of the Hooghly, extends from the Haldi to within 6 miles of Geonkhāli. Of the other *parganas* Bālijorā and Kasbā Hijilī lie at the mouth of the Rasūlpur; the latter is virtually an island surrounded by the Hooghly, the Rasūlpur and the Kunjapur Khāl. Naruāmuthā and *Kismat* Patāspur lie outside the Bāgda-Rasūlpur higher up, and all the other *parganas* are south and west of that river. Majnāmuthā extends from the sea-coast south of Contāi to near Bālighāi at the head of the Bāgdā; and Bālijorā, Amirābād, Majnā Nayābād, Dattakurāi, Kismat Sibpur and Sharifābād lie all round it or are intermixed with it, forming substantially one block.

In tracing the history of the estate, it is perhaps unnecessary to go further back than the year 1760 A.D., when it passed under the rule of the East India Company on its acquisition of the Dīwāni. The proprietor was then Jādab Rām Rai (called Jadooram by Grant), who died in 1780. His son, Kumār Nārāyan Rai, succeeded and died in 1782, leaving a minor son, Jay Nārāyan Rai, who died the following year. The succession then devolved on Jay Nārāyan's step-mother, Rānī Sugandhā Devī, who refused a permanent settlement of the estate which was offered her in 1793. *Khās* management followed till the Rānī's death in 1803, when Sundar Nārāyan Rai, the adopted son of Jay Nārāyan Rai, succeeded her. This succession was opposed by Jādab Rām Rai's six grandsons (sons of his three daughters), and the *Sadar Dīwāni Adālat* decreed the case in their favour. Passing over the many changes in the ownership of the estate resulting from death, sales of shares for debt, and the like, it was regularly settled in 1845; but in spite of this the proprietors defaulted in payment of revenue in 1851, and the estate was taken out of their hands and given in farm for a term extending to 1866. On the expiration of this term, a summary settlement was made with the proprietors for 1867-68 on substantially the

same terms as in 1845, followed by a renewal for five years till 1872, which again was extended from 1873 till such time as a regular measurement and resettlement of the estate could be made.

Survey and settlement proceedings were carried on by Mr. J. C. Price in 1874—1877, and, while they were in progress, all the shareholders defaulted. Accordingly, in 1875 the estate was brought under *khās* management for five years. In the meantime, the resettlement of the estate was completed, and the proprietors were invited to engage at the enhanced revenue fixed at the resettlement. On their refusal to accept the resettlement, the Collector was instructed to call upon them to state the highest amount of *jamā* for which they would engage. The proprietors, however, failed to specify and tender any sum, and the estate remained under *khās* management, the proprietors being allowed *mālikānā*.

Malighāti Estate.—An estate scattered over the districts of Midnapore, Hooghly, Balasore and Purī. The property in the Midnapore district is situated in thānas Debrā, Sābang, Raghunāthpur, Nārāyangarh, Bhagwānpur, Ghātāl and Dāspur. Its principal *mahāl* (Malighāti) is in thāna Debrā and lies on both sides of the river Kāsāi and of its branch known as the Kalmijol Khāl. The headquarters of the estate is at Malighāti, where there is a market called Addār Hāt from the circumstance of its having been established at the *āddā* or depôt, at which the then proprietor fed the poor during the famine of 1866.

The family owning the estate, which is known as the Chaudhuri family of Malighātī, is a branch of the Chaudhuri family of Rādhānagar in the Ghātāl subdivision. The traditions of the family state that its founder was Baidyanāth Chaudhuri, a pious man who established several *thākurbāris*, whitewashed the temple of Jagannāth, and purchased a zamīndāri in the district of Purī with a rent-roll of about Rs. 12,000, the proceeds of which were dedicated to the worship of Jagannāth. Baidyanāth Chaudhuri died in the beginning of the last century and left two sons, Guru Prasād and Krishna Mohan, between whom a dispute as to the property arose. Sib Nārāyan, a son of Guru Prasād, formed a conspiracy to take the life of his uncle, Krishna Mohan, but the latter, having got wind of it, fled from Rādhānagar at midnight and settled at Malighāti. The quarrel went on for several years, until, in 1831, it was settled by the arbitration of Pandit Iswar Chandra Bidyāsāgar and others. The zamīndāri was then equally divided between Sib Nārāyan and Krishna Mohan. The descendants of Sib Nārāyan are still living

at Rādhānagar, but their zamīndāri has passed out of their hands. Krishna Mohan, on the other hand, by able management added to his zamīndāri and was succeeded by his son Naba Kumār, who died in September 1881, leaving an adopted son, Rām Gopāl Chaudhuri, and two widows. He left a will, in which he desired that the estate should be managed by the Court of Wards in the event of his death occurring before his heir or heirs attained majority, the elder widow being merely appointed guardian. As Rām Gopāl Chaudhuri, the sole heir of the property, was a minor aged 15 years at the time of his adoptive father's death, the Court of Wards assumed charge of his property under Act IX (B.C.) of 1879. Rām Gopāl died next year, and Rāsmani Dāsi and Shakhi Sundarī Dāsi, the widows of Naba Kumār, were declared disqualified proprietresses. His elder widow Rāsmani Dāsi, with the permission of the Bengal Government, adopted a son Iswar Chandra Chaudhuri, in 1886. As he was a minor, his person and property were taken charge of by the Court of Wards and released on his attaining his majority in 1902. The area of the zamīndāri is about 50,000 *bighās* and the rent-roll about Rs. 57,000.

Maslandpur.—A village in the Maslandpur thāna of the Tamlūk subdivision, situated near the Hijilī Tidal Canal (northern section) close to Mahishādal. It is noted for its fine mats, some of which are sold for more than Rs. 100 each. In this neighbourhood there is a curious colony of Christians numbering a little more than two hundred. They claim to be descendants of some Portuguese gunners imported by the Rājā of Mahishadāl to protect him against the raids of the Marāthās; but beyond the fact that they are Christians and some of them have Portuguese names, they are not distinguishable from the other inhabitants.

Maynā.—A village in the Tamlūk subdivision, situated 9 miles south-west of Tamlūk. It contains a police outpost and an old fort, called Maynāgarh, situated on the western bank of the Kāsāi, a little above its junction with the Kāliāghāi. The fort was evidently constructed by excavating two great moats, almost lakes, so that it practically stands on an island within an island. The earth of the first was thrown inwards, so as to form a raised embankment of considerable breadth, which, having become overgrown with dense bamboo clumps, was impervious to any projectile that could have been brought against it 100 years ago. Inside the larger island, the outer edge of which is this embankment, another lake has been excavated with the earth thrown inwards, forming a large and well-raised island about

200 yards square. On this stands the residence of the Maynā Rāj.

According to the family records, the fort was originally constructed by one of the semi-mythical heroes of Midnapore, Rājā Lāu Sen, in the days when the district was under the dominion of the kings of Gaur. At the time of the Marāthā ascendancy, the descendant of Lāu Sen was ousted, owing to default of payment of the usual tribute, and the possession of Maynā was made over to Bāhubalendra, the founder of the Maynā Rāj.

During the period of early British rule, *pargana* Maynāchaur formed a part of *Sarkār* Goālpārā within the zamīndāri of Kāsijorā. Its landlord, like his brethren of the western Jungle Mahāls, was not a peaceful subject. Whenever called upon to settle for his lands or to pay their revenue, he shut himself up in his fort. At the Decennial Settlement the *pargana* was settled with the Rājā, but within three years he defaulted, and it was then settled with many *tālukdārs* in small portions, for some of which engagement was entered into by the Rājā himself under fictitious names. At that time the land was exposed to serious inundations, but it has since been considerably raised by yearly deposits of silt and yields excellent crops.

Six miles to the south of Maynā there is a depression, about 8 or 9 miles in extent, which was formerly subject to the overflow of tidal water; but the Rājā of Maynā erected embankments along it to keep off sea water, and thus brought a considerable part of it under cultivation. The depression was perhaps a creek of the sea, which in course of time silted up. This supposition is confirmed by the discovery of traces of human occupation at a depth of 16 feet below the surface in the villages of Tilda, Jalchak and others, which stand near the depression. It is possible that there was once a port on its banks.

Midnapore.—Headquarters of the district situated in 22° 25′ N., and 87° 19′ E., 80 miles from Calcutta. The name Midnapore is a corruption of Medinipur, meaning the city of the world. The town stands on the north bank of the Kāsāi river, which here attains a considerable width owing to the head weir of the Midnapore High Level Canal being situated just below the town. According to the census of 1901, it has a population of 33,140, including 26,094 Hindus, 6,575 Muhammadans and 398 Christians. It was constituted a municipality in the year 1865, and is divided into six wards. It covers an area of 4 square miles, and in form resembles a parallelogram with two irregular projections on the east.

The town is roughly divisible into two portions, the western and the eastern. The western half, which is built on laterite

soil, contains most of the public institutions and Government officers' bungalows. In its extreme north-west corner is the Central Jail with the Superintendent's house, south of it are the police lines with the police hospital, and to the east of the latter the Baptist Mission bungalow and school; next come the various courts and offices of the Magistrate-Collector, which are flanked on either side by large open spaces planted with avenues of trees. From the criminal courts a fairly wide metalled road runs for a mile southwards to the compound of the Judge's court in the extreme south-eastern corner of the town. This road passes by several bungalows occupied by civil officers and others, and also by the race-course, in the centre of which is the circuit-house. The railway station is situated a little further on to the south-west. The Judge's compound, within which are his residence and the various civil courts, is separated from the Kāsāi river by a considerable extent of open ground much cut up by small streams and *nālās*. The best wells of the town are situated in this western half; among them may be mentioned the *Fakirer Kua* (ascetic's well), which has a local reputation for sweet iron-impregnated water.

North of the race course a road leads to Gop House, which is situated about two miles to the west of the town, on a spur of laterite jutting out towards the river. This is a ruined house, surrounded by massive walls and a trench, of which no authentic history can now be traced. In the vernacular it goes by the name of *Gop-griha* or more fully *Dakshin Gop-griha*, *i.e.*, the southernmost cow-shed, for it is said that here Birāt, "lord of the cows", kept the stragglers of his herd. Its situation and the character of the remains, however, afford ground for the belief that it was merely a fort, and it is popularly believed that treasure is concealed in the recesses of the rocks.

South-west of the criminal courts is a large open space, enclosed between several roads. In the north-west corner of this space is located the postal-telegraph office; on its west stands the Midnapore College with the Principal's residence; and on its south-west is the Public Library. The centre is occupied by a large walled building enclosing a quadrangle in the middle. This building is the remains of a Musalmān fort, called Abāshgarh. During the early days of British administration a military force was posted in it. Subsequently it was used as a jail, but it was abandoned on the construction of the Central Jail.

In marked contrast with this western half, which is sometimes called Kerāni-tolā, or clerk's quarters, is the town proper spreading to the south and the south-east. It is traversed by numerous

small streets and lanes, and is thickly crowded with houses and huts, mostly poorly built and badly ventilated. Within its area are situated the municipal office, the police-station, the Town school and the various bazars. These bazars are centres of a fair trade in rice and paddy, mats, tusser cloths and bell-metal utensils. Cholera and malarial fever are prevalent in this part of the town; but with the diversion of the pilgrim traffic from the road to the railway, the mortality from cholera has considerably decreased. The drainage of the town is to the east towards the rice-fields, or to the south towards the river, the lowest levels being on the south-east.

None of the buildings in the town are of any great age or architecturally of much interest. Some of the mosques date back to the later Muhammadan period, among which may be mentioned a mosque called Sadhal at Sepoybazar, which a Persian inscription shews to have been built during the reign of Shāh Jahān. An interesting legend attaches to the Idgah at Nārāyanpur. It is said that the Emperor Aurangzeb, when marching to Orissa, came to the town the day before the *Id* festival, and, in order that he might duly celebrate it, had the Idgah built that night. There is, however, no record of Aurangzeb ever having come to this part of India. The mosque of Dīwān Saiyad Raji (*alias* Chandan Shahīd) at Miānbazar, which contains an old manuscript copy of the Korān, is said to have been built in the reign of Alamgīr, and so is the shrine of Yādgār Shāh, a contemporary of this saint, at Mahtābpur. The first two mosques are venerated and frequented both by Hindus and Muhammadans.

Of the Hindu temples the oldest is believed to be that dedicated to Hanumān. The local tradition is that about a hundred years ago a Sannyāsī from the north-west visited the town, and, having roused the religious ardour of the people, built the temple with their offerings. This shrine and the temple of Jagannāth, built 60 or 70 years ago by the shopkeepers of the bazar, are the only buildings with any pretensions to architectural beauty.

There are two Christian cemeteries with old monuments dating back to the early days of British administration. The most interesting of these is a tomb erected to the memory of Surgeon James Macrae and four other officers of the 38th Native Infantry Regiment, who fell victims to the climate of Bāmanghāti in 1832. In the south-east corner of the Judge's Court compound there is an inscription to the memory of John Pearce, who, it is said, "served the East Indian Company with honour and fidelity for 23 years, during the last twelve of which he was

Collector at Midnapore, and departed this life on 20th May 1788 in the 49th year of his age". In the compound of the residence occupied by the Collector is a tomb said to cover the remains of Pīr Pahlwān, *i.e.*, "the athlete-saint"; enormous Indian clubs are fixed in the ground round the tomb. Local tradition states that a large room in this house was used as a Darbār Hall by Warren Hastings.

"Mednipur" is described on the *Aīn-i-Akbarī* as being a large city of *Sarkār* Jaleswar which contained two forts, one ancient and the other modern; its chief was a Khandait, and its revenue 1,019,930 *dāms* (Rs. 25,498). Lying as it did on the direct road to Orissa, with the Kāsāi to be crossed in front, it became at an early date a town of considerable importance, and is often mentioned in the accounts of the wars between the Imperialist army and the Afghāns. In the revised rent-roll of the Prince Shāh Sujah (1658 A.D.) it became a part of the new *Sarkār* Goālpārā, Subah Orissa. In the rent-roll of Jāfar Khān, the *sarkār* and the *pargana* were included in *chaklā* Midnapore. In the wars of Alī Vardi Khān with the Deputy Governors of Orissa and, later, with the Marāthās, the town, as a frontier post with a fort, is frequently mentioned; Alī Vardi Khān, encamped in the town for months at a time during the Marāthā wars. In the early days of British rule, a body of native troops was stationed here, partly in the old jail, but chiefly in a cantonment now occupied by the reserve police lines, the name of which is perpetuated by the Cantonment Road to the north of the Collector's Court. A commercial factory was also located at Midnapore. The town was formally declared to be the Sadar station on 22nd September 1783 A.D.

Midnapore Subdivision.—Headquarters subdivision of the district, lying between 21° 46′ and 22° 57′ N., and between 86° 33′ and 87° 43′ E., with an area of 3,271 square miles. It is bounded on the north by the Bānkurā district; on the north-east by the Ghātāl subdivision; on the east by the Tamlūk subdivision; on the south-east by the Contāi subdivision; on the south by the Balasore district; on the south-west by the Mayūrbhanj State; on the west by the Singhbhūm district and on the north-west by the Mānbhūm district. The subdivision consists in the north and west of thinly wooded and rocky uplands; the climate is good, but the laterite soil is dry and infertile. Towards the south and east the level dips, and a swampy hollow is formed between the elevated country to the west and the comparatively high ground along the coast. There are thus two distinct tracts in the subdivision, viz., the northern

and western portions, which are undulating and picturesque, but have a poor soil, and the eastern and south-eastern, which are swampy and malarious, but fertile.

The population of the subdivision was 1,277,749 in 1901, as compared with 1,223,248 in 1891, the density being 391 persons to the square mile, which is much less than that of any other of the subdivisions. It contains 3,782 villages and one town Midnapore, its head-quarters; Kharagpur, 8 miles from Midnapore, is an important railway junction. For administrative purposes the subdivision is divided into 12 thānas, viz., Midnapore, Kharagpur, Jhargrām, Binpur, Sālbani, Debrā, Sābang, Nārāyangarh, Garhbetā, Keshpur, Dāntan and Gopīballabhpur. For the purposes of civil jurisdiction these thānas are comprised within the Munsifis of Midnapore (Sadar), Garhbetā and Dāntan.

Mughalmāri.—A village in the Midnapore subdivision, situated about two miles north of Dântan. The name means the slaughter of the Mughals and commemorates the great battle between the Afghāns under Dāūd Khān and the Mughals under Munim Khān and Todar Mal, which took place in its neighbourhood in 1575. In this battle the Mughals were not defeated as might be supposed from the name; for though they were driven back at first, they were rallied by Todar Mal and eventually secured the victory. Remains of old buildings have been found, and numerous old bricks and stones unearthed, during the excavations made for the Rājghât Road.

Nārājol.—A village in the Ghātāl subdivision, situated on the right bank of the river Silāi, 11 miles east of Keshpur. It is the headquarters of the Rājā of Nārājol, a Sadgop by caste and one of the largest landholders in Midnapore.

According to tradition, most of the Midnapore Rāj (or Bhanjbhūm) belonged to a jungle chief called Khairā Rājā. This Chief's Dīwān, his Garh Sardār and the deputy of the latter conspired and slew him. The three then divided his territory among themselves, the Dīwān appropriating Midnapore, and the other two taking possession of Nārāyangarh and Balrāmpur respectively. A local legend states that the Khairā Rājā's seven wives, upon the murder of their husband, immolated themselves on a funeral pyre and prophesied that after the lapse of seven generations the families of the three treacherous servants would be heirless, and their property go to others. In the case of the Balrāmpur family this prophecy was fulfilled, while the descendants of the treacherous Dīwān have long lost the Midnapore estate which their ancestor seized.

The following is an account supplied by the Collector showing how the property passed to the Nārājol family :—

Ajit Singh of Karnagarh, the descendant of the Dīwān, died without issue in 1753 A.D., and his two wives, Rānī Bhawānī and Rānī Siromanī, succeeded to the Midnapore Rāj. At this time the Chuārs were in the field, and the leader of the Chuārs, Gobardhan Sardār, taking advantage of the prevailing disorder, advanced against the Rānīs with a strong force. The Rānīs, to save themselves from dishonour, fled from Midnapore, and found shelter with their relation, Trilochan Khān of Nārājol, whereupon Gobardhan took possession of Midnapore without encountering resistance. Trilochan Khān having promised to crush the Chuārs and to restore Midnapore to the Rānīs, the latter entered into an agreement with him in 1756, the terms of which were that Trilochan Khān was to put down the Chuārs, to hold Midnapore as *naib* during the lifetime of the Rānīs, and to maintain the latter with befitting dignity; after their death, he and his heirs were to succeed to the Midnapore Rāj. This agreement appears to have been carried out, for the Nārājol Rājās were *Naibs* of Midnapore from 1758 to 1800, and in a judgment passed by the Sadar Amīn of Midnapore in a suit (No. 771 of 18th September 1841) it is stated that Trilochan Khān subdued the Chuār Sardār and restored the Rāj to the Rānīs.

Rānī Bhawānī died in 1760, and Trilochan's nephew and successor Mati Rām Khān became *naib* of Rānī Siromanī. On his death, he was succeeded by his nephew Sītā Rām Khān, who left three sons, the eldest of whom, Ānanda Lāl Khān, became guardian of the Rānī. The latter made over the Midnapore Rāj to Ānanda Lāl Khān by a *hebānāmā* (deed of gift) in 1800, on the strength of which he applied for settlement, the Rānī at the same time filing an application stating her inability to pay the Government revenue. The Midnapore Rāj thereupon passed peaceably into the hands of Ānanda Lāl, who executed a *kabuliyat* agreeing to pay an annual revenue of Rs. 90,214-6-11.

According to Bayley, however, Rānī Siromanī refused to pay the revenue payable under the Decennial Settlement, upon which the estate was held *khās* from 1787 to 1800. Then Ānanda Lāl Khān, as her agent, produced a deed of gift purporting that the Rānī had transferred to him the whole property, upon which the Collector entered into an agreement with him for the payment of a revenue amounting to Rs. 85,000. It may also be added that the Rānī's residence at Karnagarh was a stronghold of the Chuārs and rebel *pāiks* in the rebellion of 1799, and that the Rānī and

some of her chief servants, who were suspected to be implicated in the rising, were arrested and brought to Midnapore as prisoners.

To resume the history of the estate as furnished by the Collector, Rūp Charan Mahāpātra, a distant relation of Ajit Singh, brought a civil suit against Ananda Lāl alleging the *hebānāmā* to be a forged document. It was declared a forgery by the Supreme Court, which, in 1812, decided that on the death of Rānī Siromanī the Rāj should descend to the heirs of Ajit Singh. While this suit was pending, both the Rānī and Ananda Lāl died, and the latter's younger brother, Mohan Lāl Khān, succeeded to the Rāj. Kandarpa Singh, a distant relation of Aji Singh, thereupon brought a suit against Mohan Lāl, and the District Judge decided that the Rāj should descend to the heirs of Ajit Singh. An appeal regarding the validity of the *hebānāmā* was at this time before the Privy Council, and pending its decision the Rāj was taken under the Court of Wards. The *Sadar Dīwāni Adālat*, however, reversed the Judge's finding, and the suit concerning the *hebānāmā* was also decided in favour of Mohan Lāl by the Privy Council. The Midnāpore Rāj thus came finally into the possession of the Nārājol zamīndār.

By virtue of a will executed by Mohan Lāl, his eldest son, Ajodhyā Rām, on his father's death, got his name recorded as proprietor under the Court of Wards, which managed the estate from 1813 to 1836. Family disputes subsequently arose, and litigation was resorted to by Ajodhyā Rām's step-mother and step-brothers. Eventually, under orders of the Board of Revenue, the Collector entered the names of Ajodhyā Rām's mother and step-mother as proprietresses of the Rāj, and the Rānīs began collecting rents for their respective shares. As they failed to pay the Government revenue, the property was put up to auction and purchased by Government for one rupee. The zamīndārs of the whole district thereupon combined and resolved neither to pay any revenue to Government nor to purchase any property when brought to sale. The combination, or *dharmaghat* as it was called, having no effect on the revenue authorities, the Rānīs moved the Commissioner and the Board, but in vain, and it was only when an appeal was made to the Government of India, that the zamīndāri was restored to them.

Ajodhyā Rām and his step-brother Rām Chandra having contracted debts amounting to more than a lakh, mortgaged the property to Ashutosh Deb and Pramatha Nāth Deb of Calcutta. These men obtained possession of the whole zamindāri in execution of a decree against the creditors and sold it to a Mr. Abbot in 1847. Ajodhyā Rām then brought a suit before the Supreme

Court for setting aside the sale, and in 1852 the Court ordered that the whole Rāj should revert to Ajodhyā Rām. One Nāzir Alī, a servant of the Nawāb of Murshidābād, also laid claim to the zamīndāri, but the Supreme Court decided the suit in favour of Ajodhyā Rām. While the question of title was being fought out in the court, Nāzir Alī held possession of the estate for 18 years.*

In consequence of these suits, the Rājā contracted heavy debts, to liquidate which, he had to lease the Jungle Mahals and the Bahādurpur *pargana* to Messrs. Watson & Co. In 1853 the Rājā's homestead and zamīndāri of Nārājol were sold by auction for arrears of Government revenue and purchased by the Rājā of Burdwān. In 1879 Srīmatī Nārāyan Kumārī, the then Rānī of Burdwān, magnanimously restored Nārājol to Ajodhyā Rām, but Ajodhyā died on the very night on which this good news reached him. He left two sons, Mahendra Lāl and Upendra Lāl. Mahendra Lāl, being the elder, succeeded to the Rāj, and was awarded the title of Rājā on the occasion of the celebration of the Jubilee of the late Queen-Empress in 1887. Narendra Lāl Khān, the present Rājā of Nārājol, succeeded his father Mahendra Lāl, and was given the title of Rājā in 1895.

Nārāyangarh.—A village in the Midnapore subdivision, situated 21 miles south of Midnapore. It contains a police-station, Public Works bungalow and the remains of a ruined fort. Two ancient lines of fortification, an outer and inner line, surround the fort, the space enclosed within the latter being above half-a-mile square. The actual buildings are not very striking, though there are some fine old tanks. The Cuttack road passes through the western side of the fort, the western rampart running parallel to it for some distance.

This place was visited by Chaitanya, on his journey to Orissa, after leaving Midnapore, where a rich citizen named Kesava Sāmanta became his disciple. "Thence he went to Nārāyangarh. The Rājā of this place was a Sadgop by caste. His family had held possession of a small territory worth three lakhs a year from the time of the great Pāla Kings of Bengal. The fort of Nārāyangarh, lying on the highway between Bengal and Orissa, was regarded as the key of the latter country. So even the Emperors of Delhi always tried to keep on good terms with the Rājā. There is here a temple of Siva named Dhaneswar, who was the guardian deity of Nārāyangarh. Chaitanya paid his

* The above account differs somewhat from that given by Mr. Bayley in his *Memoranda of Midnapore.*

devotion to Siva, and then began to proclaim the name of Hari. When the *kīrtan* was at its height, Chaitanya lost his senses and began to sing and dance in the wildest manner. Govinda says that blood exuded from the pores of his skin. People flocked round to see the spectacle, bringing large quantities of flour and balls of sweetmeat, which, as usual, at once attracted Govinda's attention, and of which, he tells us, he ate twenty. Chaitanya's proclamation produced a marvellous effect at Nārāyangarh, and Bīreswar Sen and Bhawānī Sankar became his disciples."*

Nārāyangarh Estate.—An estate situated 18 miles south of Midnapore, and forming the greater part of *pargana* Nārāyangarh, which is about 18 miles long by 9 miles broad with an area of about 135 square miles. The river Kāliāghāi skirts the estate and in places intersects it. The estate was formerly held by an old family of Kaibartta Rājās, who bore the titles of "Srīchandan" and "Māri Sultān". The first was a title granted by the Rājā of Khurdā, and refers to the sandalwood which is put on the forehead at the time of investiture. The latter is a Muhammadan title, meaning "Lord of the Road", which is said to have been conferred by a Bengal king because the Rāja constructed a road for him in one night: this title is probably due to the fact that the road to Orissa ran through his territory and that he was responsible for maintaining peace and order on it. When Midnapore came under British rule in 1760, the Nārāyangarh Rājā assisted us against the Marāthās, and again in 1803. In the early British records "Tannah Narraingur" appears as a part of *Sarkār*, Goālpārā which was attached to the zamīndāri of Kāsijora (1777 A.D.). In the Chuār rebellion of 1799 the rebels committed depredations as far south-east as this estate. The greater part of it was covered with jungle, and the tract was infested with robbers and thieves who preyed on the pilgrims to Purī; the opening of the railway has changed all this.

Nayābasān Estate.—An estate belonging to the Mahārājā of Mayūrbhanj, which consists of two entire revenue-paying *mahāls*, viz., Nayābasān and Baitalpur, both situated in thāna Gopīballabhpur, about 36 miles south-west of Midnapore. Nayābasān, which is the principal property of the estate, is divided into two parts, viz., Nayābasān proper and Rohinī Manbhandār, which are situated 14 miles apart: the former lies on both sides of the Subarnarekhā, and the latter on the left bank of that river. Mahāl Baitalpur is a trifling property lying within the boundary

* *The Diary of Govinda Das*, Calcutta Review, 1898, p. 88.

of Nayābasān proper. The estate has been recently surveyed and settled at the cost of the Mahārājā.

Nayāgrām.—A village in the Midnapore subdivision, situated on the river Subarnarekhā, 10 miles north-west of Dāntan. It contains a police outpost and two forts called Khelār Garh and Chandra Rekhā Garh. The Khelār Garh is attributed to Balabhadra Singh, the third Rājā of Khelār, who completed the fortifications, of which his father Pratāp Chandra Singh had laid the foundations (1490 A.D.). The building is a fortress with towers and walls of laterite surrounded by a moat. The gate and postern are intact, and the walls are still standing. Inside, there is a good well of drinking water, but all the buildings are in ruins; here there are two curious figures in blue stone representing a man and his wife on horseback. Similar stones with rude carvings of horsemen and attendants are found before temples in Mānbhūm district, and are of no great age. The site is now overgrown with jungle. This fort belongs to the Nawāb Nazīm of Murshidābād.

The other fort is said to have been erected by Rājā Chandra Ketu in the sixteenth century. It is 1,050 yards long and 780 yards broad, and consists of a large entrenchment, more than a mile square, with one entrance on the east. The excavation of the outer moat, which runs round the *garh*, must have involved immense labour, as in many places the laterite rock is cut through for a width of 16 feet at the base and of 25 feet at the top, and down to a depth of over 12 feet. On the eastern side another deep moat was dug and a rampart constructed inside the entrenchment; on the other three sides there is only a moat. From the edge of the second moat rises the stone wall of the fort, 15 feet high, with projecting bastions.

Inside the fort there is only one building, consisting of three rooms with walls of laterite. It is curious that no doors are traceable, either from one room to the other, or from the rooms to the outside. No staircase exists, and from the absence of debris it is probable that no upper storey was built.

At Deulbārh, about one mile east of Chandra Rekhā Garh, there is an old temple of Rāmeswarnāth (Siva), which stands on a high rugged rock. The temple, which is built of stone and has carvings on the roof and walls, consists of the usual Orissan tower having a pyramidal porch in front and a refectory hall. The presiding deity is a *linga* encircled with ten rows of marks, the strokes in which number one thousand. It is said that Rājā Chandra Ketu was visited by Rāma in a dream and asked to build a temple to Siva with one thousand faces;

and so he built this temple. A *melā* is held here during the Gangā Bārunī festival in Chait. Within one mile of this place is a jungle called Tapoban, which is visited by pilgrims.

Nayāgrām Estate.—An estate consisting of *pargana* Khelār Nayāgrām, Dippa Kiārchand, and Jamirāpāl. The property lies on both banks of the Subarnarekhā river, and is situated in the most jungly part of Midnapore; cultivation is sparse, but there is reported to be ample room for extension. The head-quarters of the estate is at Kultikri. The Rājā of Nāyāgrām was originally a leader (*sardār*) of *paiks* under the Marāthās. When this *pargana* was annexed to the district in 1803, the Rājā fled, having assisted the Marāthās against us. His son, however, entered into engagements with the British Government for the estate, which is permanently settled.

Oriyāsāi.—A village in the Garhbetā thāna of the Midnapore subdivision, situated 6 miles south-east of the Chandrakonā Road station. It contains a stone temple with a marble tablet bearing an inscription to the effect that Rājā Chauhān Singh constructed it in 996 B.S. (1589 A.D.). The date affords corroboration of the correctness of the epoch assigned to the Bāgri Rājās (1555—1610 A.D.).

Patāspur.—A *pargana* in the south of the district with an area of 55 square miles. It comprises 24 estates, of which six were declared permanently settled in 1874. The remaining 18 estates are temporarily settled and comprise a total area of 39½ square miles, or 25,239 acres, of which 2,683 acres are held by *bāziāftidārs*, or holders of resumed grants, whose rents have been permanently fixed and are not liable to enhancement. These temporarily-settled estates were last settled in 1893 to 1898, the term of the settlement being 15 years dating from September 1897.

The *pargana* was a Marāthā estate up to 1803 A.D., and, being in the midst of British territory, was a source of considerable trouble (See Chapter II). It was occupied by the English in October 1803, and was finally ceded by the Marāthās with the Province of Orissa. The greater part of Patāspur was then in the hands of a lady named Renukā Debī Chaudhurānī, whose property was taken over and remained under direct Government management until 1806, when it was transferred to the Hijilī Collectorate. A number of short settlements were subsequently made, and in 1825 the *pargana* was re-transferred to the Midnapore Collectorate.

Rādhānagar.—A village lying on the Ghātāl-Chandrakonā road two miles east of Khirpai in Ghātāl subdivision. It

has an old *pancharatna* temple and some fine tanks; cloth-weaving appears to be the principal industry. Rādhanagar was formerly an important market for cotton and silk cloths. Rādhānagar silks are specially mentioned among the list of articles procurable in Lower Bengal during the second half of the seventeenth century.* In the beginning of the eighteenth century Captain Alexander Hamilton wrote:—"On the west side there is a river that runs by the back of Hughly Island, which leads up to Radonagur, famous for manufacturing cotton cloth and silk Romals or handkerchiefs."†

Rāmjibanpur.—A town in the Ghātāl subdivision, situated 9 miles north-east of Chandrakonā on the Burdwān-Orissa road. It was constituted a municipality in 1876 and had a population of 10,264 in 1901. Bell-metal articles are manufactured, and cloth-weaving is carried on. The *hāt* of Rāmjibanpur is a large market for hand-woven cloths.

Sābang.—A village in the east of the Sadar subdivision, situated south-east of Midnapore town. It is the headquarters of a police-station, and an industrial school; there is a District Board bungalow in the neighbourhood at Bamārāyan. It is connected by a District Board fair-weather road with Bālichak station on the Bengal-Nāgpur Railway. It is the centre of a considerable mat manufacture, and cloth-weaving is carried on.

Pargana Sābang is 87½ square miles in area. It is a low-lying fertile tract but malarious. It is mentioned in the *Āīn-ī-Akbarī* as a *mahāl* of *Sarkār* Jaleswar containing a strong fort in the jungle. In the revised settlement of Prince Shāh Shuja it was attached to *Sarkār* Goālpārā. Before British rule was inaugurated it belonged to the Rājā of Maynā, who levied a quasi-tribute from it. In the early British settlements it was attached to the zamīndāri of Kāsijora, but at the decennial settlement it was settled with small proprietors.

Sujāmuthā.—A *pargana* in the south of the district with an area of 45 square miles. According to tradition, Bhīm Sen Mahāpātra, the *Dīwān* of Bahādur Khān, who held Hijilī in the second half of the 16th century, made a grant of the *pargana* to his personal attendant and man-at-arms, Gobardhan Ranjhā, just as he bestowed Majnāmuthā on his clerk, Iswari Patnāik, and Jalāmuthā on his cook, Krishna Pānde. It is now held by the Mahārāj-Adhirāj Bāhādur of Burdwān, the estate having been bought in 1867 by Mahārājā Mahtab Chānd for 5¼ lakhs at a sale held in execution of a decree of the civil court.

* C. R. Wilson, *Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, Vol. I, Appendix.
† *A New Account of the East Indies*, Vol. II, p. 6.

Talkesiāri.—See Kesiari.

Tamlūk.—Head-quarters of the subdivision of the same name, situated on the Rūpnārāyan 16 miles south-west of the Pānskurā railway station, with which it is connected by road. The population in 1901 was 8,085, as compared with 5,849 in 1872. It was constituted a municipality in 1864.

Tamlūk contains the usual subdivisional offices, Munsif's courts, sub-jail, registry office, police-station, a High school, a Local Board office and a dispensary. It extends from the southern bank of the Rūpnārāyan inland for about a mile, and is traversed by several good roads. It is connected with the outside world by several District Board roads, which are, however, only fair-weather roads. Connection with Calcutta is kept up chiefly by the steamer service of the Calcutta Steam Navigation Company.

Tamlūk is historically the most interesting place in the district. Its old name, Tāmralipta, was given both to the kingdom of which it was the capitāl and to the people who held it. It is frequently mentioned in Jaina, Buddhist and Brāhmanical Sanskrit works, and it must have been in existence before the birth of Christ; Ptolemy (*circa* 150 A.D.) also noticed it in his Geography, calling it *Tamalites* and placing it on the river Ganges. It first emerges in authentic history as a port at which merchants and others embarked for Ceylon and the Far East, and is several times referred to by mediæval Buddhists, especially the Chinese pilgrims. Fa-Hian (405-11 A.D.) described it as being on the sea mouth, and resided for two years in the Buddhist monasteries here. Hiuen Tsiang in the seventh century A.D. said that it lay near an inlet of the sea and was 10 *li* (about two miles) in circuit; close by was a *stūpa* erected by Asoka. Another pilgrim I-tsing landed here from China at the close of the same century, and Hwui-Lun, the Corean, remarked:—"This is the place for embarking for China from East India, and close to the sea." In the story of Mitragupta in the *Dasa-Kumāra-Charita* (story of the ten princes), Dāmalipta is described as being among the Suhmas, close to the sea and not far from the Ganges, frequented by sea-going boats of the Yavanas and others, and, on the whole, prosperous. That it was a centre of trade, inhabited by many merchants, is clear from other references in Sanskrit, *e.g.*, the Dudhpāni rock inscription of Udayamāna, which is not later than the eighth or ninth century A.D. The place is not mentioned in subsequent works.

Probably Tamlūk gradually lost its importance as a sea-port owing to the silting up of the channel that formerly connected

it with the sea, which was once large enough for sea-going vessels to sail up. This channel survived until the middle of the sixteenth century, and is shown in the earliest European maps (of Gastaldi and De Barros). From these maps the present thānas of Maheshādal and Sutahātā appear to have formed an island, the main channel of the Rūpnārāyan flowing to their west and then south-west into the Haldi river. In old records Maynā is called Maynā Chaur, *i.e.*, a reclamation from the estuary—an indication that the Hooghly estuary extended as far north-west as this. Political changes also hastened the downfall of Tamlūk. It was annexed to the Orissan kingdom by the powerful Ganga kings, and thus became a frontier town, far from the capital and the first to suffer in war. Its trade consequently languished; and, not improbably, the river in its easterly diversion swept away part of the town.* The place, however, contained a Portuguese settlement in the seventeenth century, and was a slave market to which the Firinghi pirates brought their prisoners.

Little is now left to mark the past glory of Tamlūk. In the time of its early kings, the royal palace and grounds are said to have covered an area of 8 square miles, fortified by strong walls and deep ditches. No trace of the ancient palace is now discernible, except some ruins to the west of the palace of the Kaibartta Rājās, which is built on the side of the river, surrounded by ditches, and covers the more moderate area of about 30 acres. The old city lies under the river silt—even the great temple is now partly underground—and remains of masonry wells and houses are met with at a depth of 18 to 21 feet below the surface. A number of old silver and copper coins bearing Buddhist symbols were discovered thirty years ago in the midst of debris from the crumbling banks of the Rūpnārāyan.

The principal object of interest in the town is the temple of Bargabhīmā, who represents Tārā, one form of Saktī. This temple, which is built on the site of a Buddhist *vihāra*, is divided into three apartments, viz., the Baradeul, or inner sanctuary, the Jagamohan, or hall of audience, and the Nātmandir, or dancing hall, which is also used for offerings. There is a small raised covered passage between the Baradeul and Jagamohan, which is called Jnān Mandap, where Pandits meet to discuss religious subjects. The whole building is on a raised platform accessible by a flight of stairs consisting of 22 steps. There is a *naubatkhānā* just at the top of the grand stairs, and the whole enclosure is surrounded by high walls, out-offices, kitchens, etc. The idol is formed of a single block of stone with

* Monmohan Chakravarti, *Geography of Old Bengal*, J.A.S.B., 1908, pp. 289-91.

hands and feet attached to it in mezzo-relievo. The deity is represented standing on the body of Siva and has four hands. The upper of the two right hands holds a three-pointed spear and the lower one a sword. The upper left hand holds a human skull with human blood in it, while the lower holds the head of a demon. There are also two little idols representing Siva, and a small image of Dasabhujā Mahishamardinī, on the same platform with the chief goddess.

Although a Saktī temple, it is crowned by a *chakra* or discus, which may have been set up by one of the Kaibartta Rājās, who ruled during the Muhammadan period, and were apparently Vaishnavas by religion. This also may be a reason why animal sacrifice is not encouraged in the temple. The temple is of the Orissan style of architecture, and is modelled after the temple of Purī.

Various conflicting traditions narrate how the temple was founded. The most popular relates how in the days of king Garuradhwaj, of the ancient Peacock dynasty, a fisherman was one day unable to procure a dish of *saul* fish for the table of the king, and the angry monarch ordered him to be put to death. The fisherman managed to make his escape to the jungle, where the goddess Bhīmā appeared to him. She told him to lay in a stock of the fish and dry them, and promised that she would restore them to life, when he wanted them, by sprinkling them with the water of a certain well, which had the virtue of restoring dead things to life. The fisherman followed the instructions of the goddess, and daily took the fresh fish to the king, who, finding that the supply never failed, in season and out of season, questioned the fisherman, and extracted from him the secret of the immortal well. Thereupon the goddess, who had taken up her abode in the house of the fisherman, incensed at his betrayal of the secret, fled, and assuming the form of a stone image, seated herself over the mouth of the well, so as to hide it from view. The fisherman showed the king the spot, and the latter, not being able to get at the well, built the temple over the image. Other legends declare that the well, besides containing the essence of immortality, had the faculty of turning everything dipped in it into gold.

The temple of the goddess is situated on the bank of the Rūpnārāyan, and the honour of its construction is ascribed to various persons. Some say that it was built by Biswakarmā, the engineer of the gods. It is generally, however, ascribed to the king of the Peacock dynasty mentioned above, although the Rājās of Tamlūk assert that the founder of their dynasty,

the first Kaibartta king, was its builder. Another legend relates how a famous merchant, named Dhanapati, anchored at Tamlūk when sailing down the Rūpnārâyan. While here, he saw a man carrying a golden jug, who told him that a spring in the neighbouring jungle had turned his brass vessel into a gold one and pointed out the well. The merchant accordingly bought up all the brass vessels in the market, transmuted them into the precious metal, sailed to Ceylon, where he sold them to the natives, and, returning, built the great Tamlūk temple.

The skill and ingenuity displayed in its construction still excite admiration. The shrine is surrounded by a curious wall of stone faced on the inside and outside with brick and standing on a masonry plinth 30 feet high. The foundation consists of large logs of wood placed upon the earth in rows. The wall rises to a height of 60 feet, its thickness at the base being 9 feet. The whole is covered with a dome-shaped roof. Stones of enormous size were used in its construction, and raise the spectator's wonder as to how they were lifted into their places at a time when machinery was unknown. Outside the temple, but within the enclosure, is a *punāng* tree (Callophyllum inophyllum), supposed to have the virtue of redeeming women from barrenness. There is a small tank in the north of the enclosure, and the popular belief is that a barren woman will conceive, if she plunges into the tank with a basket of fruit on her head, picks up whatever reaches her, and suspends it to the tree with a rope made of her hair.

The dread of the anger of the goddess is great. Even the Marāthās, when ravaging Lower Bengal, left Tamlūk untouched and made valuable offerings to the temple. The river Rūpnārāyan itself is believed to still its waters as it flows by the temple, while a short distance above or below the shrine the waves are turbulent. The river has on several occasions encroached near the temple, and once reached to within ten cubits of the walls; but although even the priests deserted the edifice from fear that it would be washed away, the stream was allowed no nearer approach. As often as it passed the line, the waters were forced back, and the temple escaped without injury.

There is also a Vishnuvite temple at Tamlūk. An ancient legend relates that king Yudhisthira had resolved to perform a great *aswamedha jajna*, or horse sacrifice. This ceremony consisted in sending a horse, accompanied by a large army, round the Indian world, with a challenge to all other kings to seize it if they dared. Arjun, the warrior hero of the Mahābhārata, was in command of the force that accompanied the

horse. When the army arrived at Tamlūk, the Yubarāj seized the horse, and there was a great fight between him and Arjun. Krishna, a friend of Arjun, intervened, and the old Rājā of Tamlūk, yielding to his entreaty, released the sacrificial horse. To commemorate this occurrence, the Rājā is said to have erected the temple, in which he set up the image of Krishnārjun, which is still worshipped daily, under the title of Vishnu-Hari. The old temple was washed away by the river Rūpnārāyan, but the image was saved and was installed in the present temple, which is said to have been built by the Rājā of Tamlūk about 400 years ago.

There was formerly a Buddhist temple here with a figure of Hāritī, the mother of demons, which was venerated by the Buddhists. The following account of her origin was given by I-tsing at the end of the seventh century A.D.—"She had made a vow in a former birth to devour the children of Rājagriha, and was accordingly born as a Yaksha, and became the mother of 500 children. To nourish these, she each day took a child (boy or girl) of Rājagriha. People having told Buddha of it, he hid one of the Yaksha's children, called "the loved one". The mother, having searched everywhere, at last found it by Buddha's side. On this the Lord addressed her as follows: "Do you so tenderly love your child? But you possess 500 such. How much more would persons with only one or two love theirs?" On this she was converted and became a Upāsikā, or lay disciple. She then inquired how she was to feed her 500 children. On this Buddha said, "The Bhikshus who live in their monasteries shall every day offer you food out of their portion for nourishment." Therefore, in the convents of the western world, either within the porch of the gates or by the side of the kitchen, they paint on the wall a figure of the mother holding a child, and below sometimes five, sometimes three, others in the fore-ground. Every day they place before this image a dish of food for her portion of nourishment. She is the most powerful among the followers (retinue) of the four heavenly kings (Deva-rājās). The sick, and those without children, offer her food to obtain their wishes." According to Mr. Beal, "the Chalukyas and other royal families of the Dekhan claim to be descendants of Hāritī (Hāritīputra). The above account from I-tsing relates to the figure of Hāritī in the Varāha temple of Tāmralipti. Possibly this temple may have been a Chalukya foundation, for the Varāha (boar) was one of their principal insignia."*

* Buddhist Records of the Western World, Vol. I, pp. 110, 111.

There is little else of interest in the town, the present buildings being all modern. Close to the subdivisional compound is a monument to the memory of Lieutenant Alexander O'Hara of the 5th Battalion, Bengal Volunteers, who died on the 6th October 1793, aged 27 years. The town is still a place of considerable importance as the centre of the boat traffic on the Rūpnārāyan. The principal manufacture is that of bell-metal articles.

Tamlūk Pargana.—A *pargana* with an area of about 100 square miles. According to a report sent by the Collector, the history of this *pargana* is as follows. Tamlūk was originally held by a Rājā named Mayūradhwaja and his descendants, who were Kshattriyas by caste. The last of this line, Nisanka Nārāyan, died childless, and on his death the throne was usurped by a powerful chief named Kālu Bhuiyā, who was the founder of a line of Kaibartta Rājās. The 41st Rājā of this line, Bhāngar Bhuiyā, died in 1403 A.D., and from this time onward there is a record of the dates of each Rājā. It should be pointed out, however, that the Collector's account does not agree with the *Ain-i-Akbarī* (1592 A.D.), in which Tambulak appears as a *mahāl* of *Sarkār* Jaleswar, having a strong fort with a Khandāit, and not a Kaibartta, chief.

To continue the Collector's account, on the death of the 45th Rāja Srīmanta Rāi, in 1617, the property was partitioned between his six sons and his younger brother Trilochan Rāi, but in 1737 A.D. (1701, according to Bayley) the whole property became reunited, passing into the hands of Rājā Nara Nārāyan Rāi, a great-grandson of Srīmanta Rāi. On his death in 1752, his younger brother, Kamal Nārāyan, held the Rāj, but as he defaulted in payment of revenue, the Rāj was made over by the Faujdār of Hijilī, Masnad Muhammad Khān, to his favourite eunuch, Mirzā Didār Alī Beg. To protect Tamlūk from inundation, Mirzā Didār Alī erected an embankment on the western boundary of the *pargana*, which is known up to this day as Khojār *bāndh*. Didār Alī is mentioned as zamīndār of Tamlūk in the settlement records of 1172 B.S. (1765 A.D.), the zamīndāri at that time being included in the Faujdāri of Hijilī. On the death of Mirzā Didār Alī in 1767, the famous Dīwān Nanda Kumār Rai and Gangā Gobinda Singh succeeded in persuading the Faujdār to return the zamīndāri to Rānī Santosh Priyā, widow of Nara Nārāyan Rai, and Rānī Krishna Priyā, widow of his son. The Dīwāns got eight *mauzās* for their services, and there is still a *hāt* at Bāsudebpur in Tamlūk named Nanda Kumār Hāt.

These two Rānīs held the zamīndāri in equal shares down to the year 1771, when Rānī Santosh died leaving her share to her adopted son, Ananda Nārāyan Rai. Soon after this, Rājā Sundar Nārāyan Rai obtained a decree against Rānī Krishna Priyā. The Government *paiks* having been resisted and seriously injured while executing the decree, the Government confiscated the Rānī's share and held it in *khās* possession from 1781 to 1794. In 1789 Rānī Krishna Priyā died, and in 1795 the whole zamīndāri was permanently settled with Ananda Nārāyan Rai. Ananda Nārāyan Rai died without issue leaving two widows, Rānī Hari Priyā and Rāni Bishnu Priyā, of whom the former adopted as her son Srinārāyan Rai, while the latter adopted Lakshmī Nārāyan Rai. Srīnārāyan Rai having died in 1821, Rājā Lakshmī Nārāyan Rai applied for registration of his name in respect of the whole property. To this Rānī Hari Priyā objected, and adopted another son, named Rudra Nārāyan Rai. In spite of various disputes and of litigation with his step-mother and her adopted son, Rājā Lakshmī Nārāyan held the whole zamīndāri down to 1845. Next year Rājā Rudra Nārāyan got half the property under a decree of the Sadar Court, and a year or two later the whole property was split up into several petty estates. Half of the zamīndāri came into the possession of the Rājā of Mahishādal and the other half into that of Babu Nani Gopāl Mukharji, Babu Rākhāl Dās Mukharji and others. In 1855 Rājā Lakshmī Nārāyan died leaving two sons, of whom the elder, Upendra Nārāyan, died in 1860 and the younger, Narendra Nārāyan, in 1888. Their descendants, of whom the chief is Surendra Nārāyan Rāi, are at present living on the profits of *debottar* and *lākhirāj* lands, the whole estate of Tamlūk having been acquired by the Mahishādal Rāj.

The *pargana* is secure against drought and is fairly well protected by embankments; it also lies conveniently near to the Rūpnārāyan and the Haldi rivers for the transport of its produce, viz., rice, vegetables, and cocoanuts. The old silted-up channel of the Rūpnārāyan was in the early days of British rule widened and deepened into a canal called Bânkā Nālā, which was formally opened for traffic on 21st April 1784.* The Bānkā Nālā connected the Rūpnārāyan with the Haldi, and enabled boats to avoid the dangerous shoals and freshets at the mouth of the Rūpnārāyan river.

Tamlūk Subdivision.—South-eastern subdivision of the district lying between 21° 55′ and 22° 31′ N., and between 87°

* See notification, dated April 8th, 1784, *Selections from the Calcutta Gazette* Volume I, pages 35-38.

38′ and 88° 11′ E., with an area of 653 square miles. The subdivision, which lies along the estuary of the Hooghly and the seaboard, is a fertile tract producing rich crops of rice. There is hardly any waste land, the *jalpāi* lands, which were formerly covered with jungle, having been reclaimed and brought under the plough. Its general appearance is that of a flat well-cultivated plain intersected by river channels, *khāls* and canals; it is, in fact, particularly a network of waterways. In all, the river frontage is about 47½ miles, while the *khāls* and their branches have a total length of about 300 miles, the main *khāls* being 170 miles and the branch *khāls* 130 miles in length. The rivers and tidal *khāls* have embankments, which protect cultivation from inundations of salt water; the inland *khāls* have sluices at their mouths, and those without sluices are blocked by cross-dams in the dry weather. In Mahishādal and Tamlūk the Government maintains the *ganguriā* and *bāhar bāndhs*, *i.e.*, the sea, and large external river, embankments, and also the larger *hasiā* embankments, *i.e.*, those built along the salt and tidal *khāls*, which are connected with, and dependent on, the external large embankments. The zamīndārs of these two important estates (Mahishādal and Tamlūk) are bound to keep up the *grāmbheris*, or interior embankments.

Parts of the subdivision have become waterlogged owing to defective drainage and the silting up of the internal *khāls*. This is particularly the case in the inland tracts between Dainān and Geonkhāli, where the Suadighi, Geonkhāli and other inner *khāls* have silted up. Two canals are maintained by the Public Works Department, viz., the Midnapore High Level Canal and the Hijilī Tidal Canal extending from the Rūpnārāyan to the Rasūlpur river. The Midnapore High Level Canal in this subdivision extends from Dainān to Pānskurā, a distance of only 10 miles. The Hijilī Tidal Canal consists of two reaches. The first reach runs from near the Rūpnārāyan river to the Haldi river, a distance of about 11 miles. The second section, which is known as the Terapakhia Canal, has a length of 18 miles, of which about 10 miles lie in this subdivision, the remainder being in the Contāi subdivision.

The population was 583,238 in 1901 as compared with 534,958 in 1891. The density is 823 persons to the square mile, this being the most crowded part of the district It contains one town, viz., Tamlūk, its headquarters, and 1,578 villages, of which the most important is Geonkhāli, a considerable centre of trade. There are five thānas, viz., Maslandpur, Sūtāhātā, Tamlūk, Pānskurā and Nandigrām.

Turkoā Estate.—The properties of which this estate is composed (including entire estates, shares in revenue-paying estates and *lākhirāj* and *debottar* lands) may be conveniently divided into three groups, viz., (1) Turkoā, (2) Dāntan and (3) Kotāi. Of these groups, the largest is Turkoā *Mahāl* about 30 miles due south of Midnapore, with an area of about 13 square miles. It lies on the comparatively high ground which forms the eastern side of the Subarnarekhā valley. It is described as being sufficiently low to make rice almost the only crop, and sufficiently high to remove all apprehension of inundation in a wet year, though in a dry year the crops would suffer. The second, or Dāntan, group is generally of the same character as the Turkoā group, while the properties forming the Kotāi, or third, group lie rather lower, and most of them are within the area artificially irrigated from the Kāsāi. Taking together all the entire estates and shares in zamīndāris, the total area of the estate amounts to about 24 square miles.

Turkoā is mentioned in the *Āīn-i-Akbarī* as a *mahāl* of *Sarkār* Jaleswar with a fort in the jungle. It was in Turkoā Chāur that the great battle between the Mughals and Afghāns took place, in which Dāūd Khān was defeated in 1570.

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